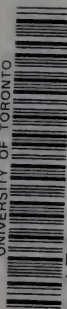


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# THE EASTERN QUESTION

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# THREE YEARS OF THE EASTERN QUESTION

BY THE REV.  
MALCOLM MACCOLL, M.A.


RECTOR OF ST GEORGE, BOTOLPH LANE



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' They are slaves who fear to speak  
For the fallen and the weak:  
They are slaves who will not choose  
Hatred, scoffing, and abuse,  
Rather than in silence shrink  
From the truth they needs must think.  
They are slaves who dare not be  
In the right with two or three'

LOWELL

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*THREE YEARS*  
*OF*  
*THE EASTERN QUESTION.*

CHAPTER I.

AIMS AND RESULTS OF THE CRIMEAN WAR.

A LARGE party among the upper, and what ought to be the best informed, classes of society in this country have succeeded in persuading themselves of the following facts: that the disturbances in the European provinces of Turkey which led to the war just ended were brought about by Russian intrigue; that the war itself was unjust and hypocritical on the part of Russia, its real object being political aggrandisement and not the amelioration of an oppressed people; that, before entering into war, the Emperor of Russia pledged his word of honour not to seek compensation by the

annexation of territory, and not to occupy Constantinople ; that the Emperor has falsified his word in this matter, and that his Government has deceived the British Government in other respects ; that the agitation against the Bulgarian atrocities paralysed the hands of her Majesty's Government and encouraged Russia to make war on Turkey ; and that the ' agitators ' must consequently share with Russia the guilt of an iniquitous war and the damage which that war is alleged to have done to British interests.

On the other hand, the Russian people are unanimously persuaded that the insurrections in the Turkish provinces were caused by the misconduct of the Turkish administration ; that the only remedy was a scheme of radical reform ; that no reform was of the slightest value which did not rest on some better security than Turkish promises ; that the Porte would have certainly granted such security under pressure from the Great Powers, but that the pressure, to be effectual, must be collective and unanimous ; that out of an unworthy jealousy of Russia England defeated the European concert, and thereby encouraged Turkey to reject the advice of Europe ; that the Governments which



took part in the Conference at Constantinople were bound logically and in honour to enforce their demands on the Porte ; that if they had shown a determination to do so in a body the Porte would have yielded without war ; that the defection of the other Powers, for which England was responsible, did not deprive Russia of the right of doing single-handed what she would have preferred to have done in concert with her allies in the Conference ; that the war thus forced upon her was a righteous war ; that England, not content with having defeated all the pacific schemes of the other Powers for the amelioration of the Christians of Turkey, has systematically misrepresented the conduct and intentions of Russia, and is now doing her best to humiliate her and to mar the deliverance which her sword has wrought for the Christians of Turkey.

This is, I think, a fair statement of the feeling on each side. That it is, for the most part, an honest and sincere feeling in both countries, I have not a doubt. The truth, however, will probably be found, as in most controversies, somewhere between two extremes, and the question is, which side has most to say for itself on a fair review of

the evidence. In the following pages an attempt shall be made to furnish the reader with the means of answering the question for himself.

From the Treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji in 1774 down to the Crimean war Russia claimed and exercised a protectorate over the Christian subjects of the Porte. To deprive her of this protectorate was one of the main objects of the Crimean war. The exclusive protectorate of Russia was considered dangerous to the general interests of Europe, and it was resolved to substitute for it the joint protectorate of all the Great Powers. This view is laid down with admirable clearness in the Memorandum which the Prince Consort submitted 'for the consideration of the Cabinet in October, 1853.' The following passage is worth quoting:—

In acting as auxiliaries to the Turks we ought to be quite sure that they have no object in view foreign to our duty and interests ; that they do not drive at war whilst we aim at peace ; that they do not, instead of merely resisting the attempt of Russia to obtain a protectorate over the Greek population incompatible with their own independence, seek to obtain themselves the power of imposing a more oppressive rule of two millions of fanatic Mussulmans over twelve millions of Christians ; that they do not try to turn the tables upon the weaker power now

that, backed by England and France, they have themselves become the stronger.

There can be little doubt, and it is very natural, that the fanatical party at Constantinople should have such views ; but to engage our fleet as an auxiliary force for such purposes would be fighting against our own interests, policy, and feelings.

From this it would result that, if our forces are to be employed for any purpose, however defensive, as an auxiliary to Turkey, we must insist upon keeping not only the conduct of the negotiation, but also the power of peace and war, in our own hands, and that, Turkey refusing this, we can no longer take part for her.

It will be said that England and Europe have a strong interest, setting all Turkish considerations aside, that Constantinople and the Turkish territory should not fall into the hands of Russia, and that they should in the last extremity even go to war to prevent such an overthrow of the balance of power. This must be admitted, and such a war may be right and wise. But this would be a war not for the maintenance of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, but merely for the interests of the European powers and of civilisation. It ought to be carried on unshackled by obligations to the Porte, and will probably lead, in the peace which must be the object of the war, to the obtaining of arrangements more consonant with the well-understood interests of Europe, of Christianity, liberty, and civilisation, than the reimposition of the ignorant, barbarian, and despotic yoke of the Mussulman over the most fertile and favoured portion of Europe.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Life of the Prince Consort*, ii. p. 526.

This Memorandum was submitted by Lord Aberdeen to the Cabinet. They all approved of it except Lord Palmerston, who declared, 'that, having sent a squadron to support Turkey, we were now bound to see her safely through her quarrel, and at all hazards to maintain the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. He scouted the idea that we should make the war the means of securing from the Porte such a recognition of the rules of European civilisation in respect to the treatment of the Christian subjects as the Prince foresaw would, unless granted and acted upon, be the fruitful source of future disquiet and warfare in Europe.'<sup>1</sup>

On further reflection, however, Lord Palmerston came round to the Prince Consort's views, as the following letter, written in 1855, shows :—

'My dear Clarendon,—What remains to be done for the Nonconformists in Turkey would be, I apprehend, speaking generally—(a) Capacity for military service by voluntary enlistment, and eligibility to rise to any rank in the army. (b) Admission of non-Mussulman evidence in civil as well as criminal cases. (c) Establishment of mixed courts of justice (with an equal number of

<sup>1</sup> Martin's *Life of the Prince Consort*, ii. pp. 525-8; and Ashley's *Life of Lord Palmerston*, ii. p. 43.

Christian and Mussulman judges) for all cases in which Mohammedans and non-Mohammedans are parties. (d) Appointment of a Christian officer as assessor to every governor of a province when that governor is a Mussulman, such assessor to be of suitable rank and to have full liberty to appeal to Constantinople against any act of the governor, unjust, oppressive, or corrupt. (e) Eligibility of Christians to all places in the administration, whether at Constantinople or in the provinces, and a practical application of this rule by the appointment of Christians at once to some places of trust, civil and military. (f) The total abolition of the present system by which offices at Constantinople and in the provinces are bought and sold, and given to unfit and unworthy men for money paid or promised. Such men become tyrants in their offices, either from incapacity or bad passions, or from a desire to repay themselves the money paid for their appointments. There ought not only to be complete toleration of non-Mussulman religion, but all punishment of converts from Islam, whether natives or foreigners, ought to be abolished.

‘Yours sincerely,

‘PALMERSTON.’<sup>1</sup>

These reforms and a good many more were embodied in the Hatti-Humayoun which the Sultan communicated to the Great Powers at the Congress of Paris in 1856. The Contracting Powers took note of the fact and recorded their sense of ‘the great value of that communication.’ In

<sup>1</sup> Ashley’s *Life of Lord Palmerston*, ii. p. 89.



return they promised not to use the Hatti-Humayoun as an excuse for interfering between the Sultan and his subjects. It was a mutual engagement. The Sultan undertook to give civil and religious equality to his Christian subjects, and on that understanding the Christian Powers promised, on their part, to respect the independence of Turkey and not to interfere in its internal administration. The inevitable inference is that the non-fulfilment of the Sultan's promises released the Contracting Powers from their promise of non-intervention. A contrary interpretation would make the Ninth Clause of the Treaty of Paris a contradiction in terms. And this was admitted by the Government in the discussion which took place in Parliament after the signature of the Treaty. That the promises of the Hatti-Humayoun should not be carried out, said Lord Palmerston, 'I hold to be as impossible as that the sun should go backwards. The fact of the Firman having been adverted to in the Treaty, and the issue of it having been recorded in the Treaty, would give the allied Powers that moral right of diplomatic interference and of remonstrance with the Sultan which I am perfectly convinced would

be quite sufficient.'<sup>1</sup> But Lord Palmerston was far from thinking, as we shall afterwards see, that armed intervention would be inadmissible in case diplomatic interference should prove unavailing.

Mr. Gladstone, too, was careful, in the same debate, to put on record his interpretation of the Ninth Clause of the Treaty of Paris. I quote his words :—

No power is renounced ; and when the Treaty proceeds to speak of a collective or single interference on the part of the Christian Powers, all it says is, that no right of interference, whether single or collective, shall grow out of the fact that the Hatti-Cherif has been communicated to the Powers. But it says not one word of the policy and practice which, from time to time, have been pursued, or anything in the way of preventing us from performing that sacred duty, even as we were in the habit of performing it long before the war commenced.<sup>2</sup>

The Treaty of Paris was signed in the spring of 1856. On May 4, 1860, Prince Gortchakoff called together the Ambassadors of the Great Powers in order to examine with them the 'painful and precarious position in which the Christians

<sup>1</sup> *Hansard*, cxlii. pp. 124-6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 94, 95.

of Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria were placed.’<sup>1</sup> The result of this consultation was a circular despatch from Prince Gortchakoff, urging the assembling of a Conference in order to exercise that ‘moral right of diplomatic interference’ with the Porte which Lord Palmerston thought ‘would be quite sufficient.’ The following extract will enable the reader to see the drift of this important communication :—

The attention, which the discussions upon the condition of the East has excited throughout Europe, makes us desirous of freeing from all error and false and exaggerated interpretation the part which the Imperial Cabinet has taken, and the object which it proposes to itself in this matter.

For more than a year the official reports of our agents in Turkey have made us acquainted with the increasingly serious condition of the Christian provinces under the rule of the Porte, and especially of Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria. This condition does not date from to-day, but, far from getting better, as was hoped, it has become worse during the last few years.

In this conviction, after having, on the one hand, vainly sought to enlighten the Turkish Government on the gravity of the circumstances, by communicating to it successively all the accounts which have been made known to us of the abuses committed by local authorities ;

<sup>1</sup> *The Two Chancellors*, p. 94.



and after having, on the other hand, exhausted all means of persuasion that we could use among the Christians, in order to induce them to patience, we have frankly and loyally addressed ourselves to the Cabinets of the Great Powers of Europe. We have explained to them the circumstances, as described in the reports of our agents ; the imminence of a crisis ; our conviction that isolated representations, sterile or palliative promises, will no longer suffice as a preventive ; and also the necessity of an understanding of the Great Powers among themselves and with the Porte, that they will consult together as to the measures which can alone put an end to this dangerous state of things. We have not made absolute propositions as to the course to be adopted. We have confined ourselves to showing the urgency, and indicating the object. As to the first, we have not concealed the fact that it appears to us to admit of no doubt, and to allow of no delay.

First of all, an immediate local inquiry, with the participation of Imperial (Turkish) delegates, in order to verify the reality of the facts ; next, an understanding which it is reserved for the Great Powers to establish with each other and with the Porte, in order to engage it to adopt the necessary organic measures for bringing about, in its relations with the Christian populations of the Empire, a real, serious, and durable amelioration.

There is nothing here, then, in the shape of an interference wounding to the dignity of the Porte. We do not suspect its intentions ; it is the Power most interested in a departure from the present situation. Be it the result of blindness, tolerance, or feebleness, the concur-

rence of Europe cannot but be useful to the Porte, whether to enlighten its judgment or to fortify its action. There can no longer be a question of an attack on its rights, which we desire to see respected, or of creating complications, which it is our wish to prevent. The understanding which we wish to see established between the Great Powers and the Turkish Government must be to the Christians a proof that their fate is taken into consideration, and that we are seriously occupied in ameliorating it. At the same time, it will be to the Porte a certain pledge of the friendly intentions of the Powers which have placed the conservation of the Ottoman Empire among the essential conditions of the European equilibrium. Thus, both sides ought to see in it a motive : the Turkish Government, for confidence and security ; the Christians, for patience and hope. Europe, on its part, after past experience, will not, in our opinion, find elsewhere than in this moral action the guarantees which a question of first rank demands, with which its tranquillity is indissolubly connected, and in which the interests of humanity mingle with those of policy. Our august Master has never disavowed the strong sympathy with which the former inspire him. His Majesty desires not to burden his conscience with the reproach of having remained silent in the face of such sufferings, when so many voices are raised elsewhere, under circumstances much less imperious. We are, moreover, profoundly convinced that this order of ideas is inseparable from the political interest which Russia, like all the other Powers, has in the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire.

We trust that these views are shared by all the

Cabinets; but we are also convinced that the time for illusions is past, and that any hesitation, any adjournment, will have grave consequences. In combining, with all our efforts, to place the Ottoman Government in a course which may avert these eventualities, we believe that we are giving it a proof of our solicitude, while at the same time we fulfil a duty to humanity.

Thus we find Russia, four years after the signature of the Treaty of Paris, complaining to her co-signataries that the promises of the Hatti-Humayoun had all remained unfulfilled. But, far from intriguing to restore her own exclusive protectorate, she proposed that the other Powers should verify her accusations, and then, if they were satisfied of their correctness, take joint action in finding a remedy. The Consuls of the various Powers were instructed accordingly to report on the condition of the Christians throughout the Turkish Empire, and on the manner in which the Turkish Government had fulfilled its engagements in the Hatti-Humayoun. I will not say that the answers returned by the British Consuls are the most terrible indictment ever made against any Government claiming a place among civilised states, because all the official reports from Turkey down to the time of Mr. Layard are of a uniform character,

They all tell one monotonous tale of intolerable wrongs never redressed ; the property, the life, the honour of the Christian population being daily at the mercy of the Mussulmans, while the Turkish officials are invariably the chief malefactors. Mr. Layard, it is true, now assures us that the non-Mussulman populations of Turkey have been tolerably well governed, and that the Turks are about the most tolerant, the most humane, and the most slandered people in the world. But Mr. Layard was once of a different opinion. The cause of his remarkable conversion it is for others to explain. His recent laudation of the Turks and vilification of their Christian victims have done so much to mislead a certain class of English society, that I may be excused a little digression for the purpose of appealing from Layard the ambassador to Layard the unprejudiced traveller. Here is his account of the Bashi-bazouks :—

They are collected from all classes and provinces. A man known for his courage and daring is named chief, and is furnished with ‘teskérés’ or orders for pay and provisions for so many horsemen, from four or five hundred to a thousand or more. He collects all the vagrants and freebooters he can find to make up his number. . . They are quartered on the villages, and are the terror of the

inhabitants, whom they plunder and ill-treat as they think fit. The chief of these roving miscreants wanders about the provinces, and, like a condottiere of the Middle Ages, sells his services and those of his troop to the Pasha who offers most pay and the best prospects of plunder.

Mr. Layard the ambassador tells us that the Christians of Turkey enjoy perfect religious toleration, and that their Mohammedan oppressors have always shown a delicate consideration for their religious scruples. But Mr. Layard the traveller gives the following evidence of what he saw with his own eyes in Armenia :—

We walked to the church, which had been newly constructed by the united exertions and labour of the people. The door was so low that a person, on entering, had to bring his back to the level of his knees. The entrances to Christian churches in the East are generally so constructed, that horses and beasts of burden may not be lodged by Mohammedans within the sacred building. . . . Yakoub [Mr. Layard's guide] pointed out a spot where above three hundred persons had been murdered in cold blood; and all our party had some tale of horror to relate.

Presently the traveller came upon evidence of a kind which recalls the descriptions of the massacre of Batak given by Messrs. Baring, Schuyler, and MacGahan :—



We soon saw evidence of the slaughter. At first a solitary skull rolling down with the rubbish; then heaps of blanched bones; further up, fragments of rotten garments. As we advanced, these remains became more frequent; skeletons, almost entire, still hung in the dwarf shrubs. I was soon compelled to renounce an attempt to count them. As we approached the wall of rock, the declivity became covered with bones, mingled with the long plaited tresses of the women, shreds of discoloured linen, and well-worn shoes. There were skulls of all ages, from the child unborn to the toothless old woman. We could not avoid treading on the bones as we advanced, and rolling them with the loose stones into the valley below. 'This is nothing,' exclaimed my guide, who observed me gazing with wonder on these miserable heaps. 'They are but the remains of those who were thrown from above or tried to escape the sword by jumping from the rock. Follow me.'

The guide led him to a spot where he could look down upon 'an open recess or platform' in the face of a rock overhanging the river Zab. This platform was 'covered with human remains.' They were the ghastly relics of a band of Christian fugitives who had escaped from an atrocious massacre of Christians 'through the valley of Lizan'—a massacre of which the ordinary English public never heard. They never do hear of more than a fraction of the horrors of Turkish domina-

tion. But let me continue Mr. Layard's description of the fugitives who escaped to the mountains from the Moslem savages who sought their lives :—

Women and young children, as well as men, concealed themselves in a spot which the mountain-goat could scarcely reach. Beder Khan Beg was not long in discovering their retreat ; but being unable to force it, he surrounded the place with his men, and waited until they should be compelled to yield. The weather was hot and sultry ; the Christians had brought but small supplies of water and provisions ; after three days the first began to fail them, and they offered to capitulate. The terms proposed by Beder Khan Beg [an officer of rank in the employment of the Turkish Government] and ratified by an oath on the Koran, were their lives on the surrender of their arms and property. The Kurds were then admitted to the platform. After they had disarmed their prisoners, they commenced an indiscriminate slaughter ; until, weary of using their weapons, they hurled the few survivors from the rocks into the Zab below. Out of nearly one thousand souls, who are said to have congregated here, only one escaped.

On this occasion, according to Mr. Layard, there perished altogether 10,000 persons, all 'massacred in cold blood !' besides 'a large number of women and children carried away as slaves.' And what had the murdered Christians done to provoke so terrible a crime ? Absolutely nothing. Their

Moslem masters coveted their goods, and the best-looking of their women : that was all. The constant massacres of the Christian subjects of Turkey have scarcely ever any better justification. Mr. Layard narrowly escaped being himself a witness of some of the massacres which he describes. A few days after his leaving a place called Tkhoma, 'an indiscriminate massacre took place. The women were brought before the chief and murdered in cold blood. Those who attempted to escape were cut off. Three hundred women and children who were flying into Baz were killed in the Pass I have described. The principal villages with their gardens were destroyed, and the churches pulled down. Nearly half the population fell victims to the fanatical fury of the Kurdish chief.' In this massacre 'perished the most learned of the Nestorian clergy.' Here again the sole cause of the atrocity was love of plunder and Moslem hatred of Christianity.

Nor is it the Christians alone who suffer. With non-Christian and non-Judaic infidels, 'the good Mussulman can have no intercourse.' It is Layard the traveller whom I am still quoting. I proceed :—

No treaty nor oath, where they are concerned, is



binding. They have the choice between conversion and the sword. The Yezidis, a non-Mussulman tribe, have been exposed for centuries to the persecution of the Mohammedans. The harems of the south of Turkey have been recruited from them. Yearly expeditions have been made by the governors of provinces into their districts; and whilst the men and women were slaughtered without mercy, the children of both sexes were carried off and exposed for sale in the principal towns. These annual hunts were one of the sources of revenue of Beder Khan Beg; and it was the custom of the Pashas of Bagdad and Mosul to let loose the irregular troops upon the ill-fated Yezidis, as an easy method of satisfying their demands for arrears of pay.

Here is Mr. Layard's account of one of their raids :—

The village was soon occupied; the houses were entered and plundered of the little property that had been left behind. A few aged women and decrepit old men, too infirm to leave with the rest, and found hiding in the small dark rooms, were murdered, and their heads severed from their bodies. Blazing fires were made in the neat dwellings, and the whole village was delivered to the flames. Even the old Pasha, with his grey hair and tottering step, hurried to and fro amongst the smoking ruins, and helped to add the torch where the fire was not doing its work. The old Turkish spirit of murder and plunder was roused.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Layard's *Nineveh*, pp. 24, 127, 134-5, 169, 175, 201.

This is the picture which Mr. Layard gave of Turkish rule just before the Crimean war. The reports of our own Consuls—who, let it be remembered, are nearly all strongly prejudiced against Russia—prove that down to the outbreak of the war just ended there has been no sort of improvement in the condition of the non-Mussulman subjects of the Porte. The Hatti-Humayoun has been absolutely a dead letter. In other words, every one of the promises made by the Turkish Government to the signatories of the Treaty of Paris, and on account of which the Porte was admitted into the family of civilised nations, has been grossly and systematically violated. The recognition of its independence has therefore lapsed by forfeit. It was a conditional recognition, and the Porte broke the conditions, and has gone on breaking them to this very hour.

Such was the state of things revealed by the response of the Powers to Prince Gortchakoff's circular despatch of May, 1860.

Meanwhile the Syrian massacres took place, and the question of how to deal with this outburst of Turkish ferocity absorbed the attention of the Cabinets, to the exclusion of the more general

inquiry suggested by Prince Gortchakoff. The English and French Governments felt that, having lately saved Turkey from destruction and deprived the Christians of the protection of Russia, they were bound in a special manner to interfere ; and their intervention took the form of armed coercion. To this, indeed, Lord Palmerston consented 'unwillingly, fearing lest there would be much difficulty in getting the French out again.'<sup>1</sup> The Porte endeavoured, by the mouth of the Grand Vizier, A'li Pasha, to avert foreign occupation by threats of more massacres ;<sup>2</sup> and the English Ambassador at the French Court played the rôle of Mr. Layard at Constantinople, by conjuring up a dreadful vision of what the Turks would probably do if they were driven to the wall. But M. Thouvenel, the French Foreign Minister, cut short all such arguments by the sensible reply :—

M. Thouvenel observed that he could not admit the reasoning, that, because a Turkish Minister was apprehensive that if a foreign force should be landed in Syria there would be disturbances at Constantinople, the Great

<sup>1</sup> *Life* by Ashley, ii. p. 181.

<sup>2</sup> *Correspondence relating to the Affairs of Syria*, 1860–61, p. 13.

Powers were on that account to desist from a measure that had appeared to them necessary for the future tranquillity of that country. If such reasoning were once to be admitted, it would be put forward on every occasion when an abuse was to be corrected in Turkey.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Russell, then Foreign Secretary, met the menaces of the Turkish Government in a spirit not less becoming than that displayed by the French Foreign Minister :—

‘The accounts,’ he said, ‘which have been received from Syria during the last ten days have been of the most frightful character. Besides the numbers killed in actual conflict, 5,500 persons have been the victims of massacre, and 20,000, including the widows and children of the murdered, are wandering in a state of famine through the country. While these dreadful things were going on the Turks appear to have been inactive spectators, where they were not accomplices in the work of massacre. At Deir-el-Kamar Osman Pasha disarmed the Christian inhabitants, and, after eight days of privation, exposed them to be shot and cut to pieces by their ferocious enemies. The conduct of the Turks in other places exposes them to the suspicion of favouring the wholesale murders of the Christians. Indignant at this want of humanity and of energy, Her Majesty’s Government have received, and accepted, a proposal of the Emperor of the French to send European troops to Syria to prevent

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence relating to the Affairs of Syria, 1860-61*, p. 14.

further excesses . . . I have spoken throughout this despatch of French troops only. Her Majesty has determined to send a squadron to the coast of Syria, with a power to be vested in the Admiral to land marines, if necessary.'<sup>1</sup>

France and England accordingly got the other signatories to the Treaty of Paris to agree to a Protocol sanctioning foreign occupation, to be undertaken by England and France on behalf of all the Powers. Still the Porte threatened massacres with a view to frighten the Powers from a policy of coercion. To this threat France and England sternly replied by more than doubling the army of occupation; and the Porte, finding that they were in earnest, did what the Porte always does in such circumstances—it made a merit of necessity and welcomed as friends the force which it durst not oppose as foes. With the occupying force went an Anglo-French Commission to investigate the causes of the massacres and to take measures for reforming the Government of the Lebanon. The English Commissioner was Lord Dufferin; and the first thing he and his French colleague did was to denounce the ring-leaders of the massacres, the worst of them being

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence relating to the Affairs of Syria, 1860-61*, pp. 115-16.



then, as always, a Pasha of high rank. Fuad Pasha, the Turkish Commissioner, was thus obliged to put his brother Pasha on his trial. The criminal was, like Chefket Pasha, honourably acquitted. This tampering with justice was met by the Government of that day not by feeble remonstrances and futile requests, but by a peremptory order to punish the murderer. It was in vain that Fuad Pasha pleaded the danger of exciting the fanatical population of Damascus by hanging a Pasha in one of their streets. He was told that French soldiers and English marines would know how to deal with the fanatical Mussulmans of Damascus. The guilty Pasha was accordingly tried again, convicted, and hanged; and not a Mussulman lifted his hand to avenge the deed. The swaggering Mussulman, like bullies all the world over, is easily cowed by an exhibition of determination and force.

Lord Dufferin drew up a Constitution for the Lebanon which, after some modifications which certainly did not improve it, was submitted to the Turkish Government for its sanction. The Porte of course objected, and pleaded the recognition of its 'independence' by the Treaty of Paris. France

and England, declining argument, quietly intimated that the Foreign occupation should last till the Porte accepted the Constitution. The Porte yielded of course, as it generally does under pressure, and the French army occupied Syria for a year afterwards in order to give the new Government of the Lebanon a fair start. Lord Dufferin's Constitution is far enough from being perfect ; but it has at least given tranquillity to the Lebanon, and diffused a feeling of security within the area of its jurisdiction.

What part did Russia play in this transaction ? Prince Gortchakoff, on behalf of the Czar and his Government, cordially approved of the Anglo-French intervention, and ordered the officer in command of the small Russian squadron on the Syrian coast to place himself under the orders of the British Admiral.<sup>1</sup> Nor was this all. France then occupied in the imagination of Lord Palmerston the place which Russia occupies now in the minds of so many worthy people. Lord Palmerston was convinced that France had designs on Syria ; and through Syria on Egypt. He got

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence relating to the Affairs of Syria, 1860-61*, p. 7.

fidgety, therefore, about the prolongation of the French occupation, and began to put pressure on the French Government with a view to abridging the period agreed on. Prince Gortchakoff remonstrated in the following despatch :—

As the period fixed for the evacuation of Syria draws nigh, we cannot help looking upon the prospect of it with lively apprehension. Your Excellency was called upon, at the time of the last Conference at Paris, to express the conviction of His Majesty the Emperor that the premature cessation of the occupation, before a definitive organisation and the installation of a regular power had replaced the regular guarantees resulting to the Christians from the presence of the European troops, would produce calamities which the Great Powers ought seriously to anticipate, in the interest of humanity and of their own dignity. We state with regret that not one of the facts which have happened since that time, and the information which has reached us, is of a nature to disperse those fears. We see them, indeed, participated in by strangers of all countries residing in Syria, whose interests and very existence are in question, and who have just attested the unanimity of their sentiments and views by the petition which they have addressed, in the most pressing terms, to the Great Powers of Europe. Will you have the goodness, M. le Comte, to bring this subject to the notice of the Representatives of the Cabinets who took part in the last deliberations? We consider that we should be wanting in our duty if we did not call their



attention to the dangers which might result from a complete termination of the foreign occupation on a fixed day, without any regard to the critical situation in which Syria might be left, and without any of the previous conditions having been as yet fulfilled, which, in our opinion, might have supplied the place of the guarantees of which the Christian population might see themselves suddenly deprived by the departure of the very troops who had received from Europe the mission of providing for their security. In such a case, it would only remain for us to decline formally, as we have already done, all responsibility for the results of a determination of which we had foreseen and pointed out the consequences.

Your Excellency is instructed, by order of our august Master, to allow no doubt on this head to remain in the minds of your colleagues.<sup>1</sup>

Is it possible to find here any evidence of intrigue on the part of Russia? Honestly accepting her position under the Treaty of Paris, she appealed to the Powers who imposed that Treaty upon her. She complained that the Christians of Turkey were being cruelly ill-treated in violation of the Hatti-Humayoun, and claimed the co-operation of the other Powers in devising a remedy. The other Powers, and England in particular, found on inquiry that the case was even worse

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence relating to the Affairs of Syria*, ii. pp. 106-7.

than Prince Gortchakoff had represented it. So again, when the Syrian massacres took place, Russia insisted that all would be well if the six Powers would only act together and lay their commands on the Porte. And when France and England proposed a policy of coercion Russia was the first to support them. She was also the first to remonstrate, in the interests of humanity, against the premature abandonment of the Anglo-French occupation. And all the while Russia had not a single soldier in Syria.

## CHAPTER II.

## A NEW DEPARTURE IN ENGLISH POLICY.

THE next phase of the Eastern Question brings us to a new departure in English policy. Down to the Cretan insurrection of 1866-7 the policy of England towards Turkey had been a policy of diplomatic intervention, ending, when that was deemed necessary, in material coercion. And one of the strongest advocates of that policy was Lord Palmerston. In a 'Memorandum on Greek Affairs sent to Lord Goderich' on December 6, 1827,<sup>1</sup> Lord Palmerston says :—

It seems now to be perfectly certain that the Porte is obstinately determined to refuse compliance with the demands of the Allies with respect to Greece ; and unless therefore the Allies are prepared to abandon the objects for which they coalesced, and to expose themselves, by so

<sup>1</sup> Published for the first time by Mr. Evelyn Ashley in the *Times* of January 18, 1877.

doing, to the derision of the whole world, it becomes necessary for them to concert, in pursuance of the agreement they have entered into, such further measures as may be necessary for the accomplishment of the ends of the Treaty of London. Persuasion, reasoning, and threats having failed to sway the Porte, actual coercion must be resorted to.

At the close of the Crimean war Lord Palmerston believed, as we have seen, that 'diplomatic interference and remonstrance would be quite sufficient' to keep the Porte faithful to its engagements under the Treaty of Paris. But when the massacres of 1860 proved that 'diplomatic intervention' was *not* 'quite sufficient,' he adopted at once, as he did in 1827, a policy of 'actual coercion;' and the expedition to Syria was the result. It is a notable fact, too, that in the debate on the Treaty of Paris in 1856, Lord Palmerston went out of his way to explain that the maintenance of the Turkish Empire did not necessarily mean the maintenance of the Turkish race in that Empire. 'We did not engage,' he said, 'to maintain in the Turkish Empire this or that race—one dominant party or the other.'

It was hoped at the time that the lesson which

the Turkish Government had received from the Anglo-French occupation of Syria and the enforcement of a new administration on the Lebanon might induce them, in their own interest, to turn over a new leaf. This consideration, together with the accession of a new Sultan, caused further action on Prince Gortchakoff's circular dispatch to be postponed. The beginning of a new reign afforded Lord Palmerston an opportunity of pressing some salutary advice on the Sultan, and this he did in a letter to Sir Henry Bulwer, then Ambassador at the Porte. He recommended the Sultan to put 'into execution' the system of liberal toleration and progressive internal improvement established by his predecessor *on paper* . . . But the Sultan must begin by clearing out the harem, dismissing his architects and builders, and turning off his robber ministers.' <sup>1</sup>

Such was the policy of England, or rather of Europe, down to the Cretan insurrection of 1866-7; diplomatic interference in the affairs of Turkey for the protection of the non-Mussulman population; and when diplomatic intervention

<sup>1</sup> Ashley's *Life of Lord Palmerston*, ii. p. 213.

failed, material coercion. It is the policy with which are associated the best traditions of British statesmanship, and the most illustrious names in our political annals—Liberal and Tory. Burke, the two Pitts, Fox, Lord Holland, Mackintosh, Canning, Peel, Aberdeen, Palmerston, Lord Russell, Gladstone. Let me give a few samples.

Lord Holland :—

The anti-social race which now enjoys the throne of the Constantines considers itself naturally at war with every nation with which it has not entered into a formal treaty of peace. Mr. Addison, who was not only a philosopher, but one of the wisest and best men on the face of the earth, remarked upon the bad effect of the numerous journalists in this country, and the great spirit of writing and reading politics in the country, and went on to say that, though there was no absurdity to which people, by this itch for talking and writing politics, might not be brought, he did not believe it possible that there could be persons in England who could think that we were interested in the prosperity of the Ottoman Empire ! . . . Almost every man who had held office, and had authority, stated that the opinion of Lord Chatham was, that we should never have any kind of connection whatever with the Ottoman Porte, and that opinion was fortified during the seven years' war by a similar opinion of the King of Prussia. In 1772, our allies, the Russians, sent a great fleet into the Mediterranean, for the purpose



of overpowering the Turks. What was the policy of this country? To assist the Russian navy. That fleet was refitted in our harbours, and, with the munitions and implements which it received from us, burnt a Turkish town and fleet, and continued cruising in the Archipelago for no less than five or six years.

Mr. Burke :—

I have never before heard it held forth that the Turkish Empire has ever been considered as any part of the balance of power in Europe. They despise and condemn all Christian princes as infidels, and only wish to subdue and exterminate them and their people! What have these worse than savages to do with the Powers of Europe, but to spread war, destruction, and pestilence amongst them? The ministers and the policy which shall give these people any weight in Europe will deserve all the bans and curses of posterity. . . . All that is holy in religion, all that is moral and humane, demands an abhorrence of everything which tends to extend the power of that cruel and wasteful Empire. Any Christian power is to be preferred to these destructive savages.

Sir James Mackintosh :—

It was bare justice to Russia to say that her dealings with the Ottoman Power for the last seven years had been marked with as great forbearance as the conduct of that Power (Turkey) had been distinguished by continued insolence and incorrigible contumacy. If any were disposed to deny this, let them look to the history of the Servian deputies, and they must admit that if Russia was



to be blamed at all, it was rather for the long patience she had exercised than for any premature interferences. . . . A body of Servian deputies, appointed to carry the provisions of the Treaty of Bucharest into effect, went to Constantinople for that purpose, and the Turks sent these deputies to the Seven Towers and kept them in confinement for the space of seven years, and all this Russia endured. The war against the Greeks was waged against defenceless women and children, with the superadded aggravation of the burning of villages, the rooting up of trees, the destruction not only of works of art but of the productions of Nature herself as well as those of man.<sup>1</sup>

Sir Robert Peel, in a speech in the House of Commons on March 24, 1828, said :—

Previous to the signature of the Treaty (of July 6th) an intimation was given to His Majesty's Government that it was the intention of Turkey to remove from the Morea the female part of the population and the children for the purpose of selling them in Egypt as slaves, &c. Distinct notification was given to Ibrahim Pasha that so violent an exercise of rights—if rights they could be called—that a proceeding so repugnant to the established usage of civilised nations, never would be permitted by His Majesty, and that this country would certainly resist any attempt to carry such an object into effect.

In a speech in the House of Commons on January 29, 1828, Lord Russell said :—

‘We believe the battle (Navarino) to have been

<sup>1</sup> *Hansard*, 2nd Series, vol. i. pp. 400–1,409.

a glorious victory and a necessary consequence of the Treaty of London, and, moreover, as honest a victory as had ever been gained from the beginning of the world. . . . Turkey was spoken of constantly as our ancient ally. Now the fact was, that there had never been any alliance between Turkey and this country prior to 1799, and it was not twenty years since Mr. Arbuthnot had been compelled to fly privately from Constantinople from his fear that his personal safety would be endangered by a violation of the ordinary rights of ambassadors.

‘The travelled Thane, Athenian Aberdeen,’ was not a man to let either his tongue or pen run away with him. Yet it was on the eve of the Crimean war, and from the responsible position of Prime Minister of England, that he put solemnly on record the following opinion :—

Notwithstanding the favourable opinion entertained by many, it is difficult to believe in the improvement of the Turks. It is true that under the pressure of the moment benevolent decrees may be issued ; but these, except under the eye of some Foreign Minister, are entirely neglected. Their whole system is radically vicious and inhuman. I do not refer to fables which may be invented at St. Petersburg or Vienna, but to numerous despatches of Lord Stratford himself, and of our own Consuls, who describe a frightful picture of lawless oppression and cruelty. This is so true that if the war should continue, and the Turkish armies meet with

disaster, we may expect to see the Christian populations of the Empire rise against their oppressors ; and in such a case, it would scarcely be proposed to employ the British force in the Levant to assist in compelling their return under a Mohammedan yoke.<sup>1</sup>

Thus we see that the policy advocated by Mr. Gladstone on the Eastern Question is in truth the traditional policy of England. The policy which has triumphed on the present occasion, and by triumphing has destroyed the Turkish Empire, is—whatever its merits or demerits—a very modern policy indeed. It dates from the end of the year 1866, and Lord Beaconsfield is its parent. It is a policy of non-intervention in the affairs of Turkey, qualified by going to war against any Power who should attack her. The Porte must be left alone to deal with its subjects in the way it thought best for its own interests. Or if any advice at all was to be given, it must be only to the extent of urging the Turkish Government to suppress as promptly as possible every effort of the subject population towards freedom. I am not exaggerating in the least. Here is the policy described in Lord Derby's language :—

Her Majesty's Government have, since the outbreak

<sup>1</sup> *Life of the Prince Consort*, ii. p. 528.

in Bosnia and the Herzegovina, deprecated the diplomatic intervention of the other Powers in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire. Her Majesty's Government would not, however, assume the responsibility of advising the Porte, who must be guided by what they thought best, after due consideration, for the welfare of the Ottoman Empire. It was impossible to expect them (Her Majesty's Government) to do more than to state, if their opinion was asked, that they had better follow the policy which they thought most consistent with their own interests. The gravity of the situation has arisen from the weakness and apathy of the Porte in dealing with the insurrection in its earlier stages. Such an intervention (the Consular Delegation), I remarked, was scarcely compatible with the independent authority of the Porte ; it offered an inducement to insurrection as a means of appealing to foreign sympathy against Turkish rule, and it might not improbably open the way to further diplomatic interference in the internal affairs of the Empire.<sup>1</sup>

I have called this Lord Beaconsfield's policy rather than Lord Derby's for the following reasons. Lord Derby had, twelve years previously, advocated a totally different policy. I refer of course to the now celebrated speech which he made at King's Lynn, in 1864. The following passage from that speech has been often quoted of late ; but it will bear repetition here :—

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Papers* of 1876, ii. p. 96 ; iii. pp. 174, 188, 192, 236.



I believe the question of the breaking up of the Turkish Empire to be only a question of time, probably not a very long time. The Turks have played their part in history; they have had their day, and that day is over. I do not understand, except it be from the influence of old diplomatic traditions, the determination of the elder statesmen to stand by the Turkish rule, whether right or wrong. I think we are making for ourselves enemies of races which will very soon become in Eastern Europe dominant races; and I think we are keeping back countries by whose improvement we, as the great traders of the world, should be the great gainers: and that we are doing this for no earthly advantage, either present or prospective.

No Minister has ever done so much to carry out the policy here deprecated by Lord Derby as Lord Derby himself. The speech of 1864 is in flat and flagrant contradiction to the passages from the Blue Books of 1876 which I have quoted above. How is this to be accounted for? In two ways, I believe. I wish to speak with all respect of Lord Derby. He has been scandalously abused by a section of his own party for resisting successfully their frantic efforts to push the country into war. For this service he deserves the thanks of all true patriots. But it must be owned, I think, that he is not a good Foreign Minister in a crisis. Of a

constitutionally timid temperament, there is nothing he dreads so much as responsibility. His common sense and intelligence told him in 1864 the folly of bolstering up a moribund Empire, and of alienating at the same time the goodwill of the races who are the reversionary legatees of the Turk. But when the opportunity of putting his theory into practice presented itself to him, he recoiled from the responsibility and declined the venture. A disposition of this kind would readily yield to the temptation of leaning on a stronger will which offered it what seemed like a logical basis for its own timidity. In Lord Beaconsfield—and this is my second solution—Lord Derby found the required support.

It was not till 1866 that Mr. Disraeli was in a position to impress his will on the direction of the Eastern Question. Towards the end of that year accordingly we witness a new departure in the Eastern policy of England. The late Lord Derby was then Prime Minister ; but the guiding spirit of the Cabinet was Mr. Disraeli. The Foreign Secretary was Lord Stanley, now Lord Derby. After the outbreak of the Cretan insurrection, Austria took the lead in proposing a policy. The character

of that policy will be seen in the following extracts from the despatches of Count Beust, who then filled the place now occupied by Count Andrassy. In a despatch to the Austrian Ambassador in Paris (Prince Metternich) Count Beust said :—

However much Austria might wish to see the Sultan retain his throne, she could not refuse to sympathise with and assist, up to a certain point, the Christian population in Turkey, who had often just cause of complaint, and who were bound to several of the races under Austria's sway by the bonds of blood and of religion.

On being questioned by the Russian Ambassador at Vienna as to what he meant by 'up to a certain point,' Count Beust explained that Austria wished to encourage among the Christian population of Turkey 'a wider development of their privileges, and to promote the establishment of a system of autonomy, *to be limited only by a tie of vassalage*. This, moreover, would be the surest means of making a lasting peace between the Sultan and the Rajahs ; and Austria especially is interested in contributing to that result, with a view to averting the chances of a conflagration which she has every reason to deprecate.'

In a subsequent despatch to Prince Metternich,



dated January 1, 1867, Count Beust proposed a revision of the Treaty of Paris 'and of the subsequent acts.' On January 22 he wrote to the Austrian Ambassador at Constantinople :

'The remedies,' he said, 'which have been applied during the last few years have proved powerless to overcome the difficulties which are increasing every day. The Eastern Question, taken as a whole, presents an aspect very different from that which it presented in 1856, and the stipulations of that period,' exceeded as they have been on more than one important point by events which have since then arisen, no longer suffice to the necessities of the present situation. Count Beust went on to argue that the Treaty of Paris had failed to provide sufficient guarantees for the better government of the Christians of Turkey, and he proposed accordingly 'to put the populations of the Sultan under the protectorate of the whole of Europe, by endowing them, under guarantees from all the Courts, with independent institutions in accordance with their various religions and races.'<sup>1</sup>

The French Government cordially supported

<sup>1</sup> See Emile de Girardin's *La Honte de l'Europe*, p. 53.

Count Beust's views, proposed 'a medical consultation' of the Great Powers on the condition of the Sick Man, and suggested the necessity of applying 'heroic remedies,' beginning with the annexation of Candia to Greece. Prince Gortchakoff advocated the same policy, and expressed his opinion that 'the only possible escape open to the Powers from the course of expedients and palliatives, which up to the present time had but served to increase the difficulties,' was to promote 'the gradual development of autonomous states' out of the Christian populations of Turkey.

The policy thus recommended received the sanction of all the Powers except one. That one was England. Instead of the statesmanlike policy on which the other Powers were agreed, the English Foreign Secretary succeeded in obtaining their consent to a Turkish Constitution for Crete 'spontaneously' offered by them. Like all the spontaneous reforms of the Porte, this Constitution left matters practically as they were before. The Cretans continued to be oppressed as much as ever, and are now in a state of insurrection.

## CHAPTER III.

## ENGLAND ISOLATES HERSELF.

THE next turning-point in the Eastern Question is the outbreak of insurrection in Bosnia and the Herzegovina in the summer of 1875. There is no pretence for saying that Russia had anything to do with that insurrection ;<sup>1</sup> but so many people are afflicted with Russian-intrigues-on-the-brain, that it may be well to offer some evidence in support of my statement. Those, indeed, who are acquainted with the condition of the non-Mussulman subjects of Turkey, will find in that condition a sufficient explanation of insurrection in Bosnia or elsewhere. The Christians of those provinces, to

<sup>1</sup> Lord Derby accused *Austria* of fomenting it. 'We told the Austrian Government: "It is of no use your making diplomatic efforts to put down this disturbance, or resorting to Consular Commissions, so long as your own people keep it alive, and your own officials, seeing all this, allow it to grow."' *Speech in the House of Lords*, February 20, 1877.

put the matter briefly, are deprived of the elementary rights of humanity and the rudimentary principles of natural justice. The four primary conditions of happiness for civilised mankind are security for life, security for honour, security for religious freedom, and security for property. The Christian subjects of Turkey have no security for any of the four.<sup>1</sup> They are literally outlaws in their own land, and may be wronged to any extent with impunity. That this is no exaggeration will be admitted when I add that their evidence is never received against a Mussulman, except in some isolated cases, easily accounted for, and so few that they do not affect the general statement. But to debar a man from giving evidence before the law, either as prosecutor or defendant, is clearly to make an outlaw of him. For an outlaw is defined as 'a person excluded from the benefit of the law, or deprived of its protection.' This is an exact description of the Christian subject of Turkey. The exclusion of Christian evidence against Mussulmans places him, without the

<sup>1</sup> I have given abundant evidence for this statement from official documents and other authorities, in a volume which I published a year ago ; *The Eastern Question : its Facts and Fallacies*, chap. i.

slightest redress as far as the law is concerned, at the mercy of the first Mussulman who assails him in his person, his honour, his religion, or his property. And the prohibition to bear arms deprives him at the same time of what Burke calls 'the first fundamental right of uncovenanted man, the right of self-defence—the first law of nature.' <sup>1</sup>

'Russian intrigues' are hardly necessary to account for chronic disaffection and an occasional insurrection among a population thus oppressed. Those who were on the spot and had the best means of getting at the truth, when the insurrection in the Slav provinces of Turkey took place three years ago, are unanimous in the assertion that it was caused entirely by the intolerable oppression which made the lives of the Christians a burden to them. Let me give a few examples. 'The immediate causes of discontent,' says Mr. Stillmann, the *Times* Correspondent, are the following :—

The Christian had neither justice, nor security, nor the common rights of humanity. No court sat for him, but all against him : no tenure of land held out against

<sup>1</sup> Works, p. iv. 199 (*Reflections on the Revolution in France*).



the declaration of a Mussulman, and even the sanctity of the family was constantly invaded by the carrying off of the young girls for the harems of their masters. Everywhere, and from the lips of the most dispassionate men, I heard the same confirmations.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Arthur Evans :—

To-day (Aug. 22, 1875) we made the acquaintance of the German Consul, Count von Bothemar, who expressed considerable surprise at our arriving here unmolested. From him and the other members of the consular body, who were ready to supply us with full details as to the stirring events that are taking place around us, we learnt many interesting facts relative to the causes and course of the insurrection in Bosnia. These accounts, and others from trustworthy sources, reveal such frantic oppression and gross misgovernment as must be hardly credible to Englishmen. We have heard all that can be said on the Turkish side : the main facts remain unshaken. The truth is, that outside Serajevo and a few of the larger towns, where there are Consuls or resident 'Europeans,' neither the honour, property, nor the lives of Christians are safe. Gross outrages against the person—murder itself—can be committed in the rural districts with impunity. The authorities are blind; and it is quite a common thing for the gendarmes to let the perpetrator of the grossest outrage, if a Mussulman, escape before their eyes.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Herzegovina and the late Uprising*, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Through Bosnia and the Herzegovina on Foot during the Insurrection*, pp. 254-5.

Miss Irby's name is well known for her brave self-sacrificing labours among the Christians of Bosnia and Herzegovina. She, too, scouts the idea of the insurrection being the work of foreign emissaries. And she confirms her own testimony by that of 'a Hungarian doctor in the Turkish service'—a man likely to be more Turkish than the Turks in his prejudices against Bosnian rajahs. This is what the Turco-Hungarian doctor told her:—

He was of opinion that the rising would become 'schrecklich ernst.' The causes were deep and widespread. He knew the country too well to repeat fables about foreign instigation; but he related with the fearlessness of an eye-witness the ever-recurring facts of the intolerable oppression exercised by the farmers of the taxes, of the bribery, corruption, and extortion, systematic among the Turkish officials.<sup>1</sup>

In this opinion the Italian Consul in Bosnia, Signor Durando, also agrees, and thinks that 'the only means of a durable pacification consists in organising Bosnia and Herzegovina after the example of the Lebanon.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Slavonic Provinces of Turkey in Europe*, i. p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> *Documenti diplomatici concernenti gli Affari d'Oriente Sessione del 1876-77*, p. 36. The dispatch from which I have quoted is dated 'Mostar, September 27, 1875.'



In a touching memorial addressed to the European Powers by the Christians of Herzegovina, and forwarded to the Foreign Office by Consul Holmes, the insurrection is entirely attributed to the rapacity and cruelty of the Turkish administration.<sup>1</sup>

But, in truth, the Andrassy Note supersedes the necessity of any other evidence. That Note bears the *imprimatur* of all the Great Powers, England included, and it is from beginning to end a terrible indictment against the Porte. All the troubles in Bosnia and Herzegovina are laid at its door. The Note declares that the Christians of the disturbed provinces are without security for either property or person, and the absence of religious freedom is felt all the more, owing to 'the proximity of populations of the same race in full enjoyment of that religious liberty of which the Herzegovinian and Bosnian Christians see themselves deprived. The effect of the incessant comparison is that they feel oppressed under the yoke of a real servitude; . . . in one word, they feel themselves slaves.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Parl. Pap.* for 1876, No. 2, pp. 30-40. Consul Holmes told me that this Memorial was drawn up by the Roman Catholic bishop of the district—an additional proof that Russia had nothing to do with the movement.

<sup>2</sup> *Parliamentary Papers*, No. 2 (1876), p. 80.

These are not the words of an Ignatieff or a Gortchakoff, but of the Hungarian Andrassy. And they were countersigned by all the signatories of the Treaty of Paris, except the Porte. The Austrian Government, moreover, assured Lord Derby that 'they wanted a pledge that the reforms which they proposed should be carried into execution, failing which they would not undertake to use their influence with the Christian population to advise them to lay down their arms.'<sup>1</sup>

This ought to be final. But the Russophobists are hard to convince. Let me therefore give them the evidence of the Sultan himself. If they are proof against that, what evidence will they accept? This is what the Sultan published in the autumn of 1875:

It is unfortunately true that the causes which produce trouble among the peaceable populations are in a great measure due to the unseemly conduct of some incapable functionaries, and particularly to the exactions to which the avaricious farmers of taxes lend themselves in the hope of a large profit.<sup>2</sup>

Having now cleared the ground, I proceed to give a summary of the part played by England

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Papers*, No. 2 (1876), p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 16.

and the other Powers respectively in the Eastern Question during the last three years, leaving the facts as much as possible to tell their own tale. I have established by proof that the insurrection originated in the abominable tyranny of the Turkish Government, and that Russia had nothing whatever to do with it. Nor was it Russia that opened the diplomatic campaign ; up to the Berlin Memorandum the lead was taken by Austria. And all the Powers, England excepted, urged the necessity of united action on the part of the Cabinets. England, on the contrary, as represented by Lord Derby, resolved to stand aloof, and ‘ deprecated the diplomatic action of the other Powers in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire.’ How this resolution was carried out will appear as we proceed. The first landmark is—

*The Consular Delegation.*

When the Delegation of Consuls to the insurgents was proposed Lord Derby at first objected, and then yielded. His reasons are given by himself as follows :—

When such a Mission was proposed, the Grand Vizier addressed to your Excellency a request that the British Consul might be instructed to join the Mission.

I therefore informed your Excellency, in my dispatch of August 24, that Her Majesty's Government consented to this step with reluctance, as they doubted the expediency of the intervention of foreign Consuls. Such an intervention, I remarked, was scarcely compatible with the independent authority of the Porte ; it offered an inducement to insurrection as a means of appealing to foreign sympathy against Turkish rule, and it might not improbably open the way to further diplomatic interference in the internal affairs of the Empire.<sup>1</sup>

Consul Holmes was sent accordingly, but with instructions which made his mission a farce. Here they are :—

Although the views and instructions of the different Governments are identic, *you will at the same time take the greatest pains to avoid everything that, either in the eyes of the Turkish authorities or in those of the insurgents, might have the appearance of united action, and you will therefore abstain from collective steps, but will rather act individually.* . . . Your efforts must be directed to making the insurgents understand that they must not calculate upon the support of any Power, and to persuading them to enter into negotiations with the Imperial Commissioners, and to make known their grievances to them. You will state to them that Her Majesty's Government will use their influence with the Sublime Porte, in recommending that the legitimate grievances which may be established shall be remedied or removed ; but you

<sup>1</sup> 'Dispatch of Lord Derby to Sir H. Elliot.' See *Parliamentary Papers*, No. 2 (1876), p. 96.

will be careful to avoid pledging Her Majesty's Government in regard to any measures to be taken, which must be the result of a direct understanding between the parties. It may be impossible for you to prevent the Christians from making known to you the nature and extent of their grievances, but, without refusing to listen to what may be necessary to enable you to report to Her Majesty's Embassy, in order that the insurgents may not delude themselves into supposing that the Powers guarantee the realisation of the wishes which they may submit to the Imperial Commission, you will avoid provoking any discussion of their grievances.<sup>1</sup>

Observe, in the passage which I have marked by italics, the nervous anxiety lest 'the Turkish authorities' or 'the insurgents' should think that England was acting in union with the other Powers. Consul Holmes was faithful to his instructions, as his own dispatches, and still more those of the Italian Consul, prove. An extract from one of the latter will suffice :—

My colleagues of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia, and France, have received instructions to propose to the Turkish Commissioner a project of pacifying the Herzegovina in a manner satisfactory to both parties. Yesterday evening we had a meeting on the subject. After an exchange of ideas it was unanimously recognised that the first steps towards the work of pacification were the col-

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Papers*, No. 2 (1876), p. 10.



lective action of Europe, an armistice, and a general meeting at Ragusa, where the Turkish Commissioner and the chiefs of the insurgents, together with the co-operation of the European delegates, might discuss the details of the pacification.<sup>1</sup>

On receipt of this intelligence Count Corti, the Italian Minister at the Porte, wrote as follows to his Government :—

Yesterday afternoon (October 3, 1875) I received a telegram from Mostar in which the Cavalier Durando informs me of the conclusions unanimously adopted at the meeting held the evening before by all the Consular delegates, with the exception of the English Consul (all' eccezione di quello dell' Inghilterra). Signor Durando asked me in conclusion for specific instructions in the matter. I answered immediately that he was to assist at the Conferences with his colleagues, and to use the greatest possible reserve in his interviews with the Ottoman Commissioner.<sup>2</sup>

The Porte, thus openly supported by England, refused all terms. 'I have seen the Turkish Commissioner,' says Signor Durando. 'He spurns all intervention. He recognises the grave state of the case; but does not know how it will end. . . . The military governor urges war, and hopes in fifteen days to hunt the insurgents out of the country. In

<sup>1</sup> *Documenti Diplomatici*, p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 39.

my opinion war will accomplish the ruin of the country without pacifying it. I believe that the only means of a durable pacification consists in organising Bosnia and the Herzegovina after the example of the Lebanon.' <sup>1</sup>

But why then was the Turkish Government so anxious that the English Consul should join the Consular delegation? For a reason which is thoroughly characteristic of Turkish rule. The name of England then stood high throughout South-eastern Europe as the friend and champion of the oppressed (it stands low enough now), and the Porte believed that the presence of the English Consul would so inspire the insurgents with confidence that the leaders would all assemble at the place of meeting, and could thus be surprised and massacred by the Turkish troops. The plot partially succeeded. The insurgents, about 180 in number, were laid under an engagement not to attack the Turkish troops while the negotiations were going on. Having expressed their fear that the Turks would attack them when thus off their guard, they were apparently reassured—in perfect good faith, of course—by Consul Holmes. No

<sup>1</sup> *Documenti Diplomatici*, p. 36.



sooner, however, had the Consuls left than the confiding insurgents were treacherously surprised by two battalions of Turkish troops. Some were killed, and nearly all were wounded. In reporting this infamous massacre to the Porte, Chefket Pasha, who afterwards distinguished himself in Bulgaria, described it as the result of 'clever strategy.' 'The massacre,' says Consul Holmes, 'might have been a very serious thing *for us* if it had happened one day sooner.' That it was 'a serious thing' for the poor insurgents was a fact which does not appear to have struck the Consular mind, nor, indeed, the mind of the British Ambassador at Constantinople. 'The account,' says the latter, 'relative to the engagement ["engagement" indeed!] between the Turkish troops and the body of insurgents with which the Consuls had just been in communication, *is not satisfactory.*' I should have thought that 'British interests' need not have suffered if the Ambassador of England had made bold to describe in somewhat more fitting language the foul and treacherous massacre of men who were at the time virtually under the protection of a safe conduct from a British Consul. The Consul, however, did not go without his reward. The follow-

ing *solatium* was forwarded to him from Lord Derby with an expression of 'satisfaction' from his Lordship at the testimony thus borne by the Porte to the Consul's conduct :—

March 15, 1876.

M. l'Ambassadeur,—Your Excellency is aware that Mr. Holmes, Her Britannic Majesty's Consul at Serrajevo, was the English delegate sent to Monastir at the commencement of the insurrection.

The friendly disposition evinced by Mr. Holmes on this occasion, and the perfect tact with which he has discharged his delicate duties, make it incumbent upon us to convey the thanks of the Sublime Porte to the Government of Her Majesty, and to recommend Mr. Holmes most especially to their favour.<sup>1</sup>

I beg that your Excellency will make known these feelings to the Foreign Office, and I have, &c.

(Signed) RASCHID.<sup>2</sup>

So much as to the Consular Delegation. Our next landmark is—

### *The Andrassy Note.*<sup>3</sup>

We have already seen the aim and purport of the Andrassy Note. I shall let Lord Derby him-

<sup>1</sup> Consul Holmes has since been knighted.

<sup>2</sup> The references for the Consular Delegation are *Parliamentary Papers*, No. 2 (1876), pp. 26-29, 42, 97, and No. 3, pp. 47, 52.

<sup>3</sup> The references are *Parliamentary Papers*, No. 2 (1876), pp. 91-105.

self explain how he dealt with it. In a dispatch to Sir A. Buchanan he says :—

Count Beust took occasion to observe that the communication intended to be addressed to the Porte was not regarded by his Government in the light of mere good advice. They wanted a pledge that the reforms which they proposed should be carried into execution, failing which they would not undertake to use their influence with the Christian population to advise them to lay down their arms. I stated in answer that I clearly understood this to be the Austrian point of view. So far as Her Majesty's Government were concerned, we were not prepared to do more than offer such friendly advice as the circumstances seemed to require.

In a subsequent dispatch Lord Derby returns to the subject :—

His Excellency [Count Beust] reminded me that at our last meeting he had expressly said that the object of the Austro-Hungarian *démarche vis à-vis* of the Porte was not friendly counsel only, but to obtain a definite promise that the reforms the Austrian Government advocated should be really carried into effect. That the Sublime Porte should enter into an explicit engagement towards the guaranteeing Powers to carry out the reforms in question and give a written promise to that effect, without which the Cabinets would not succeed in pacifying the disturbed districts. His Excellency added that I doubtless remembered that the Russian Ambassador had expressed to me the intention of his Government to elicit

a similar written engagement from the Porte. Count Beust stated that he had been informed by telegraph on the 24th instant that France and Italy had unreservedly acceded to this view, and that his Excellency could hardly lay too much stress on the disappointment which his Government would experience if the British Government disagreed in this point.

Even Sir Henry Elliot advised Lord Derby to join with the other Powers in pressing the Andrassy Note on the Porte, which would be sure to accept it if presented by all the Powers in their collective capacity. I quote his words :—

The proposals with which it concludes, if put into an identic instruction to the representatives here (which is understood to be what is intended), would, in my opinion, be accepted by the Porte without much difficulty.

At last Lord Derby very reluctantly agreed to give an extremely grudging and qualified support to the Andrassy Note.<sup>1</sup> In a long dispatch to

<sup>1</sup> The argument which finally overcame Lord Derby's reluctance was, it seems, administered by Count Beust. The incident is related by himself in a dispatch just published in the Austrian Red Book. It was addressed to Count Andrassy on January 9, 1876, and it certainly displays an acute appreciation of Lord Derby's character. Lord Derby objected to the Andrassy Note because it involved ulterior measures in case of the Porte's refusal, and consequently some responsibility on the part of the British Government.

But you court greater responsibility by rejecting it,' retorted.

Sir H. Elliot announcing this decision he indulges in a destructive criticism of the Andrassy Note. There is scarcely one of its proposals which he did not object to and controvert ; and, having thus damaged the Note as well as he could, he 'instructed Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople to confine his representations, in giving a general support to Count Andrassy's proposals, to oral communications.'

The Porte was in ecstasies, as it well might be,

the wily Saxon. But let me quote his own account of the matter, bristling as it does with sound reasoning and keen irony : 'You are anxious about the possible consequences of the step we propose to take ; but it is quite as important that you should consider the consequences of your refusing to take it. I know well that you are not actuated by any personal susceptibilities ; you are too superior to such considerations ; but a policy of abstention has its partisans. Now, whatever may happen, your abstention will load you with a responsibility which would be hardly in accordance with the aspirations of the country for pacific solutions. If the Porte refuses to give us satisfaction, you will be accused of having prompted their refusal. If it accepts, you will not only have been more Turkish than the Turks, but you will be made equally responsible for all that will follow. Should Turkey be slow or insincere in the fulfilment of her engagements, it will be said that she reckons on the support of England, which held aloof from them ; should the insurgents refuse to lay down their arms, this will be attributed to their having found in the isolated position of England a pretext for doubting the honest execution of the promises made to them.'



at the adroit way in which Lord Derby had checkmated the diplomatic intervention of the other Powers. 'Raschid Pasha,' wrote Sir H. Elliot, 'has expressed the most lively satisfaction at the tenor of the instructions that your Lordship is forwarding to me, of which I communicated to him the telegraphic summary.' The Porte went through the form of accepting the Andrassy Note, but let it remain a dead letter.

So far Austria takes the lead as an advocate of concerted action on the part of the Powers, ending, if need be, in coercion. Count Beust's language, quoted above, clearly points to that result. All the other Powers acted cordially with Austria, with the single exception of England, whose Minister took his stand on the policy of 'deprecating the diplomatic action of the other Powers in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire.' The defection of England from the European concert having thus, by encouraging the Porte, defeated the pacific efforts of the other Powers in the Consular Delegation and the Andrassy Note, Count Andrassy took advantage of the presence of Prince Gortchakoff in Berlin to go thither to consult the two northern Chancellors as to the next step to be taken with a view to put a



stop to the insurrection and, as far as feasible, to its causes. The result of the meeting was—

*The Berlin Memorandum.*

The Berlin Memorandum was received by Lord Derby on the 15th May, 1876. No document that I have ever read appears to me more genuine in its character, more solemn in its tone, more straightforward in its intentions, or more free from any vestige of *arrière-pensées*. The proposals contained in the Memorandum are five in number, namely,—

1. That the Turkish Government should furnish material for rebuilding the dwelling-houses and churches of the houseless and ruined refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina, and give them at the same time means of subsistence 'till they could support themselves by their own labour.' The limitation is important, as we shall see presently.
2. That the Turkish Commissioner appointed to distribute this aid should take counsel with the Mixed Commission provided by the Andrassy Note.
3. That, 'in order to avoid any collision,' the Turkish troops should be concentrated 'on some

points to be agreed upon,' 'at least until excitement had subsided.'

4. 'Christians as well as Mussulmans should retain their arms.'

5. 'The Consuls or Delegates of the Powers shall keep a watch over the application of the reforms in general, and on the steps relative to the repatriation in particular.'

'If, however,' the Memorandum goes on to say, 'the armistice were to expire without the efforts of the Powers being successful in attaining the end they have in view, the three Imperial Courts are of opinion that it would become necessary to supplement their diplomatic action by the sanction of an agreement with a view to such efficacious measures as might appear to be demanded in the interest of general peace.'

On the same day on which Lord Derby received the Berlin Memorandum he also received a dispatch from the British Ambassador in St. Petersburg, in which occur these words :—

I feel persuaded that the predominant wish of the Emperor Alexander is to maintain peace, and that his policy in regard to Eastern affairs is perfectly disinterested,

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Papers*, No. 3 (1876), pp. 140-1.

and that his sole object is to aid in pacifying the insurgent provinces of Turkey and in maintaining the Ottoman Empire.<sup>1</sup>

That the French and Italian Governments shared this conviction as to the honest and pacific intentions of the Emperor of Russia is evident from the fact of their having telegraphed at once their adhesion to the Berlin Memorandum.<sup>2</sup> Lord Derby, on the contrary, not only refused the assent of England to the Memorandum, but supplied the Porte with a series of arguments against it. He communicated it at once to the Turkish Ambassador, with a stream of his usual destructive criticism. And on the very day on which it reached him he wrote a dispatch to Lord Odo Russell, of which it is worth while to quote the leading points. He objected to the Porte being asked to give any help to the returning refugees on three grounds. First, it 'would cost a large sum of money, which the Porte did not possess and could not borrow.' Secondly, it would be unjust to make the Porte 'responsible for repairing destruction which had been, in the main, the work of the insurgents

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Papers*, No. 3 (1876), p. 143.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 151.

themselves.’<sup>1</sup> Thirdly, it ‘would be little better than a system of indiscriminate almsgiving,’ which ‘would prove utterly demoralising to any country.’

As to the first of these objections, the criticisms of the Austrian and French Governments appear unanswerable. The former reminded Lord Derby that the demand to which he objected amounted to no more than ‘only urging the complete fulfil-

<sup>1</sup> This is an entire mistake, as the pages of Mr. Evans and Miss Irby, and the dispatches of the Italian Consul, abundantly prove. The churches and houses of the Christians were burnt by the Mussulmans. Let me quote one or two extracts from the Italian Consul. After stating that he had seen the mutilated bodies and heads of ‘poor refugees’ floating in the Save, and that he was travelling with the Consuls of Austria and Germany, he says :—‘In our voyage from Mostar to Metkovich, we began to observe the ruin that had been wrought. In the plain of Gabella were two considerable villages burnt, Dracevo and Doljani. The Catholic Church was destroyed, the country deserted.’ The same ruin met them in the country ‘beyond the Narenta.’ And the chief sufferers in that region also were Roman Catholics. Let Lord Derby read the following, and then say if the ruin was the work of the insurgents themselves :—‘*Quegli incendi erano stati appiccati dai Mussulmani di Stolatitz aiutati dal comandante la [?] della gendarmeria di Mostar e dai soldati turchi del confine. Gli abitanti, quasi Cattolici, presentando il pericolo, si erano rifugiati in massa sul vicino territorio di Dalmazia. Gli uomini validi però presero le armi.*’ When the Consuls advised the insurgents to go home, the latter replied :—‘*Voi, signori consoli, ci dite di ritornare alle case. Ma dove sono esse? Le abbruciarono i turchi.*’—*Documenti Diplomatici*, pp. 42, 44.

ment of an engagement which the Porte had already entered into.' The latter made the pertinent observation that the prosecution of the war, which necessarily resulted from Lord Derby's rejection of the proposed armistice, would be likely to cost the Porte more than the aid demanded for the returning refugees. None of the Powers condescended to notice Lord Derby's 'indiscriminate-almsgiving' objection. It carefully evaded the explicit reservation of the Berlin Memorandum, that aid should only be given till such time as the refugees 'could support themselves by their own labour.'

The second article in the Berlin Memorandum was rejected by Lord Derby because it would infringe the authority of the Sultan.

To the proposal of an armistice he objected because it might interfere with the military plans of the Porte.

But perhaps the most extraordinary objection of all is that which Lord Derby made to the proposal that the Christian as well as the Mussulman population should be allowed to retain their arms. 'If the insurgents were to return armed to meet the Mussulmans, also retaining their arms, a



collision would be inevitable.' So Lord Derby avoids the 'collision' by letting loose the armed Mussulmans upon the unarmed and defenceless Christians. And this in spite of the following passage in a dispatch from the British Ambassador at Vienna:—'Count Beust having also stated that your Lordship disapproved the proposal that the Christians should retain their arms, his Excellency (Andrassy) answered *that the Christians would prefer the disarming of the Mussulmans*; but as it would be impossible, without serious disturbance, to apply such a measure to men who had been accustomed to wear arms from their childhood, the only way of establishing equality between the two populations would be to extend the right to do so to Christians.'<sup>1</sup>

The other Powers strove by urgent persuasion and solemn warning to get Lord Derby to reconsider his decision. The British Ambassador at Berlin reports:—

Prince Bismarck admitted that the several articles of the Memorandum were open to discussion, and might be modified according to circumstances, and that he, for one, would willingly entertain any improvement Her Majesty's

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Papers*, No. 3 (1876), pp. 176-7.



Government might have to propose. But he greatly regretted that Her Majesty's Government had not felt able to give a general support to the principles of the plan submitted to them by the Northern Powers, and agreed to by France and Italy, and had felt obliged to withdraw from the cordial understanding so happily established between the six Great Powers in regard to the pacification of the Herzegovina.

Five days later 'His Excellency renewed the expression of the regret the German Government felt at the inability of Her Majesty's Government to support the policy of the five Great Powers at Constantinople.'

The Duc Decazes 'again expressed his surprise and regret at the refusal of Her Majesty's Government to join in the new proposals of the three Imperial Courts.' Two days later the Duc Decazes told our representative in Paris 'that in view of the regrettable difference in the matter of this Memorandum which had arisen on the part of England, he had addressed a pressing appeal (*une démarche instante*) to the English Cabinet.'

The Duke added 'that the Austrian Chargé d'Affaires called upon him after Prince Hohenlohe's departure, and informed him that he was instructed to say that Count Andrassy would try to retard

the intended step at Constantinople if the Duc Decazes could see some chance of inducing England to draw nearer to the views of the other Powers, at least as to the armistice.'

The Italian Minister repeated the regret which he had already expressed at Lord Derby's decision, adding that he hoped at all events Her Majesty's Government would consent to advise the Porte to accept the armistice ; and if they could not join in recommending the other measures, that they would at least say nothing which might be an encouragement to the Turkish Government to reject them. ' If the Turkish Government did not feel that they would be supported by England in declining to accept the proposals, he had some hope that they might agree to them. . . He was firmly convinced that Russia had no ambitious views at this moment, and that she was sincerely desirous for a termination of the insurrection. . . If the present proposals were not accepted, some more decisive measures would become necessary.'

The French Minister of Foreign Affairs made one more desperate effort to persuade the English Government to 'reconsider their decision,' so that England might, after all, renounce her present iso-

lation, and thus a concert of the six Powers might still be obtained. 'But besides these and other observations,' says the British Chargé d'Affaires at Paris, 'the Duc Decazes spoke to me at length and in peculiarly earnest language, of the result which he dreaded if, by the non-consent of *all* the Powers, an armistice became impossible and thus the present struggle was to be kept up. His Excellency drew a graphic picture of the probable spread of the insurrection, of the consequent rising of one Province after another in the Ottoman Empire, of the greater and greater effusion of blood, of the gradual dismemberment of the Empire, until at last, as he feared, all Europe might be drawn into the vortex.'

All the other Powers saw clearly enough the abyss to which Lord Derby's *laissez-faire* policy was leading Europe. He and his chief alone were blind.

To all the remonstrances and appeals of Europe Lord Derby turned a deaf ear. He would do nothing himself, nor allow anybody else to do anything. 'I told Count Beust that I had no plan to propose.' 'Would he then agree to a Conference?' inquired the French Government. 'I replied that

I saw no objection to a Conference in principle, but I thought it would be useless without a basis ;' and a basis Lord Derby would not take the responsibility of suggesting. The simple truth is that the other Great Powers were solicitous for the welfare of the oppressed Christians in Turkey, while Lord Derby and his chief were only solicitous for the maintenance of the *status quo*. This comes out in two of his dispatches to Sir H. Elliot, *à propos* of the Berlin Memorandum. He assured the Turkish Ambassador that 'Her Majesty's Government would not assume the responsibility of advising the Porte, who must be guided by what they thought best, after due consideration, for the welfare of the Ottoman Empire.' 'I have to point out to your Excellency,' he writes to Sir H. Elliot on May 19, 'that Her Majesty's Government have, since the outbreak of the insurrection in Bosnia and the Herzegovina, *deprecated the diplomatic action of the other Powers in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire.*'<sup>1</sup>

Although deserted and thwarted a third time by England, the Governments of the five Powers

<sup>1</sup> See *Parliamentary Papers*, No. 3. (1876), pp. 152, 174, 177, 178, 185, 187, 188, 191-3.

determined to act together. Their course of action is described by Count Corti, the Italian Minister at the Porte. In a dispatch dated 'Therapia, May 29, 1876,' he says :—

The Ambassador of France received to-day an order, by telegraph, to take common action with his colleagues of Russia, of Austria-Hungary, of Germany, and of Italy in presenting the communication founded on the Berlin Memorandum. We met therefore by agreement at 5.30 P.M. at the German Embassy, and resolved to present to the Sublime Porte the common note [la nota identica] of which I enclose a copy. Your Excellency will find that this document contains the five demands laid down in the Memorandum. The most perfect harmony reigned at this meeting among the five representatives. I have only to add that the identic notes will be presented to-morrow by Signor Vernoni and his colleagues the first interpreters.<sup>1</sup>

On the morrow, however, the Sultan was deposed, and Count Corti telegraphs that 'it was impossible to make an official communication to the Sublime Porte before the new sovereign was formally recognized.'<sup>2</sup>

Up to this point Russia played a secondary part. Austria took the lead, and was energetically supported by France, Italy, and Germany, and

<sup>1</sup> *Documenti Diplomatici*, p. 202.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 209.



cordially, but less prominently, by Russia. England stood aloof with folded arms, refusing to do anything herself, and frustrating the earnest endeavours of the other Powers to restore peace, and at the same time ameliorate the lot of the Christians. In the early part of June the Russian Government came more to the front. On the seventh of that month the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs wrote to the Ambassador of Italy at St. Petersburg :—

To-day the representative of Russia called to communicate a telegram which he received yesterday from the Prince Chancellor, and according to which the Government of the Czar proposed that a declaration should be made to the Ottoman Porte that the five Powers, continuing in a perfect and intimate accord for the pacification of the Insurgent Provinces, agreed to suspend their official relations with it until they saw some proof that the Government of the Sultan intended to execute the important reforms which he had lately assured them that he wished spontaneously to concede. This communication of the Imperial Cabinet is perfectly in harmony with the mind of the Italian Government. The instructions already imparted to the representative of the King at Constantinople are precisely in the sense of giving the Government of Murad V. to understand that if the change of reign affords the Powers some ground of hope in the good intentions of the new sovereign, and



of expectation that the situation may be modified through his spontaneous and generous action, it would nevertheless be a vain illusion to suppose that these circumstances have diminished the interest of the Powers in a sensible amelioration of the lot of the populations of Bosnia and the Herzegovina. The Government of Constantinople may prevent a fresh intervention of European diplomacy by itself initiating large concessions and earnestly translating them into acts. But it is necessary that the Ministers of the Sultan should clearly understand the urgency of a crisis that demands precautions which would seriously modify the situation. These instructions Baron d'Uxkull will have already made known to Prince Gortchakoff, who will be able to see in them a perfect agreement with the ideas disclosed in the recent communication which his Highness addressed to me through the Envoy of the Emperor.<sup>1</sup>

The Russian Government at the same time addressed itself directly to Lord Derby:—

What was the solution of the difficulty which England desired to see adopted? What was the drift and object of British policy? . . . If the London Cabinet has in view any means for obtaining this end, whether on the basis already proposed or by a more complete solution without incurring the risk of stirring up a general conflagration, perhaps even a war of extermination in the East, we are ready to welcome any idea which the Cabinet might communicate to us, for we sincerely desire a good understanding with them.

<sup>1</sup> *Documenti Diplomatici*, p. 204.

Lord Derby coldly replied :—

Nothing, I thought, remained, except to allow the renewal of the struggle, until success should have declared itself more or less decisively on one side or the other.<sup>1</sup>

When the trained, well-armed troops of the Sultan succeeded in crushing a few hundreds of untrained and half-armed insurgents, the latter, Lord Derby thought, 'would moderate their demands, and they would acquiesce in some such arrangement as that made with the Cretans after the war of 1866-67'—acquiesce, that is, in a sham.

A little later Prince Gortchakoff sounded Lord Derby, through Count Schouvaloff, in order to ascertain whether the English Government would agree to join the other Powers in demanding 'an administrative autonomy' for the disturbed Provinces.<sup>2</sup> Lord Derby gave no encouragement to the suggestion; and thus another phase of the Eastern Question passed into the limbo of lost opportunities.

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 3 (1876), pp. 260-1, 284.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 350.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE BULGARIAN ATROCITIES: A SUMMARY OF  
FACTS OFFICIALLY ATTESTED.

HOW wonderful is the power of prejudice! A number of educated people in this country have succeeded in persuading themselves that the Bulgarian massacres are due entirely to 'Russian intrigues.' The Russians planned the 'insurrection,' and then General Ignatieff, the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople, dissuaded the Porte from sending regular troops into Bulgaria. The consequence was that the 'insurrection' was put down by Circassians and Bashi-bazouks who committed—as Ignatieff intended that they should commit—sundry excesses. These excesses, however, were enormously exaggerated in England, chiefly by 'Russian agents;' the number of Christians massacred throughout Bulgaria being little over 3,000.

Such is the theory. On what evidence does it rest? On no evidence at all. It is purely and simply a product of the imagination. Our Russo-phobists believe that Russia is capable of doing what they impute to her: therefore they conclude, in the absence of all evidence, that she has done it. It is a maxim in controversy that a disputant cannot be called upon to prove a negative. His opponent is bound to give evidence in support of his case before he can claim either credence or reply. But though not bound to disprove what I will take the liberty of calling the ‘Ignatieff myth,’ till some attempt has been made to substantiate it by facts, I will nevertheless proceed to show that it is not only without evidence, but against evidence.

First, then, as to the origin of the insurrection. Mr. Baring, a member of the British Embassy at Constantinople, was sent by Sir Henry Elliot to investigate the facts on the spot. Another gentleman had been previously nominated to the post, and Sir Henry Elliot was supposed—probably on insufficient grounds—to cancel that appointment in favour of Mr. Baring, because that gentleman was understood to be more favourably disposed

towards the Turkish Government. Mr. Baring was accompanied by his father-in-law (a Levantine), who acted in the capacity of interpreter, and had the reputation of being a strong philo-Turk. I mention these details to show that if Mr. Baring had any bias at all, it was in favour of the Turks. His various Reports, however, prove that he subordinated all other considerations to an honest determination to discover and publish the truth.

Now what does Mr. Baring say about the origin of the Bulgarian insurrection? A 'Bulgarian Committee,' he says, 'was established in Bucharest about fourteen years ago for the purpose of fomenting insurrection in Bulgaria.' He uses words which might imply that this committee was composed of foreigners, which, in the minds of ninety-nine out of every hundred of his readers, would mean Russians. In a subsequent Report Mr. Baring corrects this impression as follows:—

There is an expression in my Report which I want to correct, as I think otherwise it would mislead those who read it. I have applied the word 'foreign' to the emissaries and agitators who stirred up the revolt. The principal men, such as Benkowsky, Vankoff, Haritou and others, were all Bulgarians by birth, but had lived for many years in Roumania or Servia. It is true they came

from abroad ; but, as regards Bulgaria, they should not be called foreigners. Among the leaders was a man who was known as ‘Odessali ;’ but it is doubtful whether he was a Russian or only a Bulgarian settled at Odessa. I never intended in my Report to convey the impression that *bonâ fide* foreigners took an active part in the revolt ; but I quite understand that the expression I used might lead people to suppose that such was my opinion, and I therefore hasten to correct it.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Baring’s own explanation of the outbreak is the common-sense and true one. ‘Wherever,’ he says, ‘there is Turkish rule, there, owing to its inherent faults, there will be Christian discontent. Last spring this was naturally heightened by the total failure of Mahmoud Pasha’s high-sounding firman of reforms, by the deaf ear turned by the Porte to petitions from Bulgaria, and by the heavy pressure of taxation.’<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Schuyler, the Commissioner sent into Bulgaria by the American Government, agrees substantially with Mr. Baring.<sup>3</sup> But there are some

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 1 (1877), p. 526.

<sup>2</sup> The average taxation of the Christian subjects of Turkey is 67 per cent. This does not include illegal extortions, which are of course very common under a system which leaves the Christians without any protection or redress. See *Consular Reports for* 1860, p. 25, and for 1867, p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> *Turkey*, No. 1 (1877), p. 167.



persons who will accept no evidence in this matter which is not either Turkish or from purely philo-Turk sources. This seems to me a little unreasonable. Nevertheless, they shall have the kind of evidence which they demand. I have before me a 'Report presented to the Sublime Porte by the Extraordinary Tribunal instituted at Philippopolis, to judge persons implicated in the late events in Bulgaria.' This Report is in large part a gross travesty of the facts.<sup>1</sup> But on the point in dispute, namely, the origin of the revolt, it agrees entirely with the Reports of Messrs. Baring and Schuyler. Here is what it says :

The Revolutionary Committees formed in Moldo-Wallachia and in Servia had constantly for a long time past been kindling the flames of revolt among the Bulgarians of Roumelia, and had been making, with this in view, all kinds of sacrifices. . . This programme aimed at nothing less than a revolution, having for its object the independence of Bulgaria under a new Government.<sup>2</sup>

With this agrees a 'Report presented to the Sublime Porte by Chakir Bey, Imperial Commissioner, sent to the Vilayet of the Danube to make

<sup>1</sup> Sir H. Elliot calls it, 'as unsatisfactory a document as could well be seen.'—*Turkey*, No. 1 (1877), p. 143.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 176.

inquiry into the troubles of which that Province has been the scene.’<sup>1</sup> In neither of these Turkish Reports is there a hint or suggestion that Russia had anything to do with the insurrection. That Russians sympathised with the aspirations of the Bulgarian Committee is true enough, just as it is true that Englishmen sympathised with the aspirations of Mazzini and Garibaldi. That some Russians may have expressed their sympathy by gifts of money is also possible, as some Englishmen did in the cases I have named. But it is more certain that the Russian Government had nothing to do with the matter than it is that the English Government had nothing to do with the enterprise of Garibaldi against the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. No Russian, according to Mr. Baring, took an active part in the Bulgarian insurrection. A number of Englishmen, without let or hindrance from their Government, took part in the expedition of Garibaldi. I was told, four years ago, by a Roman Cardinal, that the man most responsible for the success of the Italian Revolution and the consequent creation of the unity of Italy was Mr. Gladstone, ‘His pamphlet on the Neapolitan

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 1 (1877), p. 172.

*régime*,' said his Eminence, 'did more mischief than the sword of Garibaldi. It inflamed the mind of Europe, and made it possible for Cavour to din what he called "Italy's cry of anguish" into the ears of the plenipotentiaries at the Congress of Paris. The consequence of that was the battle of Solferino, and of that again the piratical expedition of Garibaldi and the spoliation of the States of the Church. It is all Mr. Gladstone's doing.' And so his Eminence rejoiced in the accession of Mr. Disraeli to office. 'We shall now,' he said, 'have at least the moral support of England towards the maintenance and restoration of the old order of things.'

The Cardinal was so far right that if there had been no change of Government in the beginning of 1859, it is possible that the Austrians might still be in occupation of Venetia and Lombardy, and the Bourbons still reigning at Naples. The late Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli made no secret of their determined hostility to the cause of Italian liberation. Their speeches and the dispatches of Lord Malmesbury are on record to prove what I say. The feeling of the nation, however, was very strongly the other way, and thoroughly approved

of the 'benevolent neutrality' which Lord Palmerston's Government accorded even to the technically indefensible enterprise of Garibaldi. Yet to compare the rule of Austrians or Bourbons in Italy to that of the Turks in Bulgaria is in fact to compare the rule of civilised men, however arbitrary and tyrannical, with that of savages. From indolence, or caprice, or the influence of bribes, the rule of the savage may permit here and there a certain measure of prosperity to those who are subject to it. But there is no security for anything. The dominant ferocity of his nature may break out in a moment and spread devastation around. Now the Turk, with all his coating of French polish, is at heart a savage. He may be amiable and good-natured till he is roused. Savages generally are. But towards the non-Mussulman, who is subject to his rule, the Turk admits no law but that of his own sweet will. The life and honour and property of his Christian neighbour are his, to deal with them as he pleases; and he is not slow to avail himself of his privilege. The Turk is what he is, however, not by any inherent vice of race or nature, but in virtue of what Mr. Herbert Spencer would call his 'environment.' His religion, his law, his traditions inculcate undying hate and scorn for the

‘unbeliever’ (‘ghiaour’). Let me give one or two illustrations of how cheap a Christian’s life is held in Turkey. The first is from the *Times* Correspondent in the Herzegovina :—

I made the acquaintance of an army surgeon who had been attending a Christian boy of thirteen, wantonly shot in broad daylight by a Mussulman boy of twelve. The young assassin was carried in triumph round the neighbourhood by his comrades, and the wounded youth to the hospital. It seemed that the young Turk had had a present of a rifle (army pattern), and had gone out to try it. Seeing the Christian lad gathering grapes in his mother’s vineyard, he took deliberate aim and shot him through the body at close quarters. . . I had all the particulars from the surgeon, and the facts as to investigation from the Consuls, on whose complaint an investigation by the Turkish officials was ordered. A report fully recognising the facts was made, and there the matter ended. ‘Making a report’ is to the Turkish mind the *ne plus ultra* of judicial investigation into any matter in which Mussulman deeds are called in question. The Pasha was astounded when the Consuls protested against this trivial manner of treating the incident, and replied, ‘Have we not made a report?’ The culprit never was molested. The Turks divide their judicial proceedings in a manner ingenious, if not just. They investigate Mussulman offences without any punishment, and punish the Christian without any investigation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Herzegovina and the late Uprising.* By W. J. Stillman. Pp. 67–8.



To make the last sentence quite accurate, it ought to be added that when the Mussulman offences are done against Christians, they are not even 'investigated without any punishment,' except under pressure from a foreign Consul or Ambassador.

My second illustration is from one of Mr. Baring's admirable Reports on the state of the Christians in Bulgaria :—

As regards the general condition of the Christian peasantry, I regret to say that it is as deplorable as ever. One well-authenticated incident will give an idea of the universal manner in which the Mussulmans are armed. A Pomak <sup>1</sup> child receiving the other day some real or imaginary offence from a Christian woman in a village near Peshtera, drew a pistol and fired point-blank at the woman, wounding her severely in the belly.<sup>2</sup>

This youthful assassin was 'a boy of eight or ten years.' These two incidents give a vivid picture of the wretched lot of the Christian subjects of the Porte. They are absolutely defenceless. They cannot call their property their own. The honour of their women is not safe from day to day ; and

<sup>1</sup> The Pomaks of Bulgaria are the descendants of the native Christians, who apostatized when the Turks conquered the country.

<sup>2</sup> *Turkey*, No. 1 (1877), p. 525.



their lives may be taken in sport and with impunity by any Mussulman child who chooses thus to amuse himself. It is surely conceivable that a people domineered over in this horrible manner by a minority, small in number, but armed to the teeth, may be goaded into insurrection without the stimulus of Russian or any other intrigues. But of course the oft-told tale of the wonderful prosperity of the Bulgarians will be retorted upon me. That myth has been exposed over and over again. But myths die hard and some minds are impervious to criticism and logic. As the Russian soldiers advanced into Bulgaria the Turkish population all fled before them. And they fled so precipitately that they had no time to devastate the country. Thus it happened that the invaders and the newspaper Correspondents who accompanied them beheld waving cornfields, fruitful vineyards, and lowing herds; and they hastily concluded that the Bulgarian peasantry were ordinarily in tranquil enjoyment of all these good things. This was a delusion. Nobody accused the Turk of killing the goose that laid the golden eggs. He was not quite fool enough for that, except now and then when his passions were aroused, or the geese got

so numerous that it was thought expedient to diminish their number.<sup>1</sup> The accusation is that he carried off the eggs, leaving the goose little to live on besides the shells. And this accusation is made in Consular Reports and Ambassadorial Dispatches innumerable, and in the volumes of writers who lived for months, and some of them for years, among the Bulgarians. In the towns, indeed, it paid the Pashas to encourage the accumulation of wealth, for that was the surest means of amassing for themselves rapid fortunes through bribes and extortion. Midhat Pasha understood this thoroughly.

But if the Russophobists will not believe me, perhaps they will believe one of their own

<sup>1</sup> From the time of Pharaoh downwards, periodical massacres have been resorted to by barbarous despots as an effectual means of keeping down a subject population. This motive has generally been at the bottom of Turkish massacres, and had a good deal to do with the massacres in Bulgaria. 'From what I can make out, I am really inclined to think that the object at this moment, in the lately disturbed district of Tirnova, is to diminish the number of Bulgarians as much as possible.'—*Dispatch of Consul Reade, Turkey*, No. 3 (1876), p. 333. The *Standard's* Special Correspondent at Constantinople writes as follows on the 3rd of last November :—'The rulers of the country are infuriated against the Bulgarians, and seem determined that either by death, or imprisonment, or exile, the race shall be exterminated.'

coryphæi. The *Standard* newspaper bears me no goodwill, and it has more than once attacked me in terms which transgress the legitimate limits of fair and courteous controversy. Nevertheless I will do the *Standard* the justice of acknowledging that it has in one respect at least set a good example to some of its philo-Turk contemporaries in the press. It evidently laid no other embargo on its foreign Correspondents than to tell the truth. And they did tell the truth, sometimes in a way which came into collision with the editorial leaders. An instance of this kind is the letter from the Special Correspondent of the *Standard* at Constantinople in the issue of March 8 of this year. And I refer to it because it furnishes an indirect, and consequently a more telling, refutation of the alleged prosperity of the Bulgarians. The Correspondent is greatly troubled by the Russian terms of peace. And this is how he reasons—very intelligently and acutely, as it seems to me. The passage is somewhat long; but it will repay perusal:—

There are, of course, many here who declare that Russia will continue to act as she acted before the war, and will foment intrigues in the provinces which she has left to the Sultan, until she has gradually led up to the

final catastrophe. This may be so, but if I were a Turk I should dread the good conduct of Russia more than her misconduct. By intrigue she may doubtless destroy the Turkish Empire : but the task will not be unattended by difficulty, and cannot be rapidly accomplished ; whereas, by carrying out the Treaty fairly, and in the spirit in which she claims to have framed it, she may destroy the Turkish Empire with ease.

Let us assume—and the assumption is not an extravagant one—that during her two years' occupation of Bulgaria she succeeds in establishing a good Government, in providing for the future maintenance of order, in giving security to life and property, and in framing an equitable system of taxation. If she does this the population of the province will be largely augmented by immigrants, its natural resources will be developed, and its wealth will be vastly increased. Is it reasonable to suppose that the people of that part of Roumelia which is left to the Sultan will not envy the lot of those who are growing rich in that part which is taken away from him ? Is it probable that the inhabitants of Adrianople, 150,000 in number, will be content to look out across the Maritza into a land flowing with milk and honey, and not sigh for the removal of the political barrier which shuts them out from it ? I was talking yesterday with an Englishman who has lived in this country for many years, and who knows it and its rulers well. 'The Turks,' said he, 'ought to have allowed Adrianople to be included in Bulgaria. They would have gained largely by thus parting with it. I see how hard it would have been for them to have given up the first capital of the Ottoman Empire,

but still they should have made the sacrifice. Adrianople would soon have grown wealthy under Christian rule, and out of the trade between it and Constantinople the Turks would have gained a large revenue.' Now if my friend's view be correct, I want to know how long Adrianople will be content to be deprived of the means of growing wealthy? Is it probable that Salonica, with its 70,000 inhabitants, will be content to stagnate, while a new maritime city rises into life and power and wealth in its immediate vicinity? And if Russian rule produces the same results in that part of Armenia which is to be ceded to Russia—if Batoum and Ardahan, and Kars and Bayazid, become rich and flourishing towns—is it to be supposed that the people of Trebizond and Erzeroum will not pine for annexation?

I will not spoil the effect of this frank admission by a single comment.

So much, then, as to the origin of the revolt in Bulgaria. Let us now see how much truth there is in the accusation against General Ignatieff of having counselled the Porte not to send regular troops to suppress it, in the hope that the atrocities caused by the irregulars might help him to work the ruin of the Turkish Empire.

On the evening of May 3, a telegram reached Constantinople announcing an outbreak in Panigurishta. On the following day 800 regular troops were despatched from the capital to the scene of the



disturbances. These were followed in the course of the two following days by 1,600 more, together with 34 horses and a battery of mountain guns. At the same time Adil Pasha, Commander-in-chief of the garrison of Constantinople, was appointed to the chief command of the troops operating in the Province of Philippopolis, and started at once with his staff. Before May 8, 3,000 regular troops had left Constantinople for the Sandjak of Philippopolis. On May 8, 400 cases of muskets and 2,200 cases of ammunition were dispatched for Adrianople to be distributed among the Redifs (Reserves). On May 3, the day after the outbreak of the so-called insurrection, four companies of troops left for the scene of the outbreak, nine hours distant. These were followed, the day after, by 300 Redifs.

All these facts were published at the time in the papers of Constantinople, including the *Levant Herald*, a paper printed in French and English, and edited by a philo-Turk of the deepest dye.

The Correspondent of the semi-official *Turquie*, writing from Philippopolis under the date of May 8, gives a brief account of the outbreak, and says :—



The Mutessarif telegraphed to the Vali of Adrianople to dispatch immediately the troops found in Tchirpan in order to pacify these villages. This small army of 150 men arrived here on the following day (May 4), and left for Bazardjik. . . . The Mutessarif then ordered the *tabouraghassi* (the chief) of the Redifs of our town to collect his battalion and send them to Bazardjik. Two days after this another battalion was sent by rail.

Towards the end of his letter the correspondent says :—

The regular troops have arrived from Constantinople with cannons. They started on their expedition accompanied by many thousands of Redifs and Bashi-Bazouks, who were collected from the neighbourhood to go in pursuit of the insurgents.

On May 15—I still rely on the papers, official and non-official, of Constantinople—three battalions left the capital for Bulgaria. On May 16 one battalion and two squadrons of cavalry. On May 17 Abdul Kerim and Chefket Pasha followed these troops.

My next piece of evidence is conclusive. The Report of the Turkish Commission, already quoted, (p. 79) says :—

‘The Bulgarian insurrection, which broke out in the district of Philippopolis and the Caza of Bazardjik, has been promptly suppressed *by the Imperial armies.*’

I now come to British evidence. I find the following statement in a dispatch, dated May 6, from Vice-Consul Dupuis to Sir Henry Elliot:—

The local authorities, on hearing of the massacre at Otloukeuy of five Zaptiehs and an *employé* of the Konak by insurgents, and, fearing an attack on Tatar-Bazardjik, collected together an armed force of the Mussulman inhabitants and started in pursuit of the murderers, who immediately fled to the mountains. On the arrival of military reinforcements, however, from this on Thursday last, further apprehensions were calmed and order and tranquillity restored. . . . Much activity is displayed here in calling out the Redifs of the Province and dispatching them to the seat of the disturbances, while troops are continually arriving from Constantinople for the same destination.<sup>1</sup>

Writing to Sir Henry Elliot, under date of May 9, Mr. Dupuis says:—

I have no further intelligence respecting the state of affairs in Philippopolis beyond what I reported to your Excellency in my dispatch of the 7th inst. I am therefore inclined to believe that the panic has somewhat ceased, and that the presence of the military has reassured the people.

Sir Henry Elliot himself is still more explicit. In a dispatch, dated May 7, he tells Lord Derby

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 3 (1876), p. 145.

that 'about 5,000 troops have been dispatched from here' (Constantinople).<sup>1</sup>

On May 8, Hafons Pasha, the commander of the troops at Tatar Bazardjik, telegraphed to the Vali of Adrianople that he had 'heroically' captured a village of unarmed Christians.

On the other hand, the 'insurrection' in Bulgaria was about the feeblest attempt at a rising that can well be conceived; and by May 8, there were certainly troops enough in the district—I mean regular troops—to put down without difficulty a disturbance of fifty times the dimensions of this puny effort. Vice-Consul Dupuis indeed, as we have seen, declares that on May 9 the presence of the regular troops had 'reassured the people.' Before that date, in fact, the 'insurrection' was at an end.

Let us now look at the dates of the massacres. They are given in Mr. Baring's Report. The massacre of Batak was on May 9; that of Peroushtizza by Raschid Pasha on May 13; that of Klissoura on May 7; that of Boyadjikeui by Chefket Pasha on May 30. 'What makes the act of Chefket Pasha so abominable,' says Mr.

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 3 (1876), p. 144.

Baring, 'is that there was not a semblance of revolt. The inhabitants were perfectly peaceful, and the attack on them was as cruel and wanton a deed as could well have been committed.' Chefket Pasha, be it remembered, was a lieutenant-general in the regular army of the Sultan.

The plain facts of the case, therefore, are these:— On the evening after the first symptoms of revolt had appeared in Bulgaria, regular troops were sent from Constantinople to suppress it, and these were closely followed by reinforcements. A rising which was never formidable was thus speedily suppressed. In his famous and futile dispatch of September 21, 1876, Lord Derby truly describes it as 'an insurrectionary movement which was at no time of a dangerous character.' 'In the mean time,' says the same dispatch, 'there can be no doubt that the conduct of the Vali of Adrianople, in ordering the general arming of the Mussulmans, led to the assemblage of bands of murderers and robbers, who, under the pretext of suppressing insurrection, were guilty of crimes which Mr. Baring justly describes as the most heinous that have stained the history of the present century.'<sup>1</sup> But the irregulars

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 1 (1877), p. 237.

were not the only murderers and robbers, as Lord Derby admits in another dispatch, where he denounces the 'outrages and excesses committed by the *Turkish troops* upon an unhappy and, for the most part, unresisting population.'<sup>1</sup> The worst of these outrages happened, as I have proved by dates, after some thousands of regular troops had arrived, and every vestige of resistance had disappeared ; and in almost every case they were the work either of regular troops or of men under the command of regular officers. The criminal-in-chief was in fact the Turkish Government, and Midhat Pasha in particular. In support of this accusation I appeal to two facts : first, the testimony of the Mussulman Notables of Bulgaria ; secondly, the testimony of no less a personage than Chefket Pasha himself. When Lord Salisbury reached Constantinople he sent Consul Calvert and Captain Ardagh into Bulgaria to collect the opinion and evidence of the Mussulman landowners. Consul Calvert reports as follows :—

I have now seen all the local 'Begis' or Turkish landowners. They every one comment strongly on the wretched state to which the population at large has been

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 1 (1877), p. 105.



reduced through Ottoman misgovernment, and which has caused the discontent that has brought the country to its present pass.<sup>1</sup> . . . The Bulgarian Notables whom I have questioned here *agree in laying all the blame of the late excesses in these parts (Philippopolis) on Akif Pasha, whom they believe to have acted with the approval, if not at the instigation, of the central government.*<sup>2</sup>

Chefket Pasha's testimony is perhaps still more damaging than the evidence of the Mussulman proprietors of Bulgaria. Midhat Pasha, though not Grand Vizier at the time, was nevertheless the ruling spirit of the Turkish Government. He it was who sent Chefket Pasha, an intimate friend of his own, into Bulgaria. And when that criminal, whom Mr. Baring justly classes with Nana Sahib,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I suppose it will be admitted that the Mussulman land-owners of Bulgaria are likely to be better judges of the condition of the population than an occasional newspaper Correspondent, who chanced to see only a narrow strip of country, and that under conditions which made accurate information impossible. The Mussulman Notables, be it observed, knew nothing about 'Russian intrigues.'

<sup>2</sup> *Turkey*, No. I (1877), pp. 170-1.

What makes the act of Chefket Pasha so abominable is that there was not a semblance of revolt; the inhabitants were perfectly peaceable, and the attack on them was as cruel and wanton a deed as could well have been committed . . . For this heroic exploit, Chefket Pasha has received a high place in the Palace; 'Nana Sahib alone, I should say, having rivalled their [Chefket's and Achmet Agha's] deeds.' —*Mr. Baring's Report.*



had fulfilled his bloody mission, Midhat was active in procuring his promotion and decoration, and afterwards in shielding him from the effect of Lord Derby's *brutum fulmen*. The Vali of Adrianople, whom Lord Derby denounced as one of the chief authors of the massacres, was a relation and bosom friend of Midhat Pasha. This man ordered Haidar Bey (Mutessarif of Slimnia) to arm and let loose the Bashi-bazouks on the Christians of his district. The brave Mussulman refused, and then Chefket Pasha was sent to execute the Vali's orders—with what success the world knows but too well. Haidar Bey, nevertheless, did his best, and not without some success, to protect the Christians of his district. He saved seven villages from ruin. Some time after Lord Derby's despatch, Haidar Bey was sent for to Constantinople, and pressure was put upon him by the Government to give perjured evidence in favour of Chefket Pasha. He refused; and the end of it was that he was removed from his post and disgraced by Midhat Pasha. This is strong evidence against the Turkish Government; but there is stronger to come.

‘It is certain,’ says Mr. Schuyler in his second

report, 'that nearly all those who particularly distinguished themselves for their cruelty and barbarity were rewarded, decorated, or promoted by the Porte, or have since held high positions in the army.' Chefket Pasha replied to Lord Derby's denunciation by a defiant letter in the official organ of the Turkish Government. I quote the account of the incident from the letter of the Special Correspondent of the *Times* :—

He alleges that he has done nothing in Bulgaria besides executing, in his military capacity, the orders he had received, and not from the Government of Abdul Aziz, but from the present rulers. This he writes, and no one dare gainsay it, for both himself and the other murderers—Achmet Agha Timbrichli and Achmet Agha Bacontuliuli—boast that they have in their pockets the Minister's injunctions to slay, to burn, to terrorise, and will produce them if challenged.<sup>1</sup>

Sir Henry Elliot gives the same account, though more briefly. In a despatch to Lord Derby he says :

I have spoken to the Minister of War of the discredit incurred by the Porte by allowing so much time to pass without an investigation of the charges against Chefket Pasha, and I told him that as the General professed to

<sup>1</sup> *Times* of November 6, 1876 ; the Correspondent of the *Daily News* confirmed the communication of his colleague.

have in his pocket orders which would show that he had done no more than carry out his instructions, his continued impunity would lead to a belief in the truth of his assertion.<sup>1</sup>

The case against the Porte must be strong indeed when the Secretary of a Legation accredited to it could venture to publish with impunity the following accusation :—

‘It has been claimed,’ Mr. Schuyler says in his second report, ‘that the massacres and outrages in Bulgaria were not ordered by the Porte, and that it even had no knowledge of them. There is, however, very strong reason to believe that Abdul Kerim Pasha, the Serdar Ekrem, who was sent to put down the insurrection, and has since been the Commander-in-Chief of the troops operating against Servia ; Hussein Avni Pasha, the late Minister of War ; and Midhat Pasha had cognisance of these deeds, if they did not actually order them.’

I think I may now leave the reader to judge whether the Bulgarian atrocities were the work of General Ignatieff. It is indeed humiliating that any portion of one’s countrymen should allow their prejudices to commit them to the gross injustice, and not less gross folly, of making such an absurd accusation. General Ignatieff is nothing to me

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 1 (1877), p. 729.

but a name; but I have a prejudice in favour of truth, and I am jealous of the reputation of my countrymen for common-sense and fair play.

The question of the number of Christians actually massacred need not detain us long. Mr. Schuyler, who made a careful examination at the time, says: 'I am inclined to put 15,000 as the lowest for the districts I have named.' Mr. Baring, after giving the data of his calculation, says: 'Taking all these circumstances into consideration, I think I cannot be accused of exaggeration, nor of wishing to paint things blacker than they really are, if I maintain the estimate I previously made, viz., that about 12,000 persons perished in the Sandjak of Philippopolis.' Both Mr. Baring and Mr. Schuyler, it will be observed, limit their estimate to the district which they personally visited, namely, the Sandjak of Philippopolis. So does Mr. Consul Dupuis, whose estimate agrees with Mr. Schuyler's. But though the worst massacres took place in the district named, the Christians were attacked, and large numbers killed, in other districts. In fact, a secret edict seems to have gone out to the Mussulmans, like that of old from the palace of Shushan,

‘to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish . . . both young and old, little children and women,’ who belonged to the Bulgarian nation. The Bulgarians wear a national costume which makes it easy to recognise them, and many of them perished, not only in Bulgarian districts outside the Sandjak of Philippopolis, but also along the Black Sea coast, and even in Asia Minor.

Doubts having been cast on the accuracy of Mr. Baring’s figures, he returned to Philippopolis in September 1876, and despatched thence another Report on October 5. Mr. Clarke, an American missionary, declared Mr. Baring’s estimate to be ‘far above the mark.’ I may remark parenthetically that the Central Relief Committee at Constantinople afterwards found Mr. Clarke’s figures so inaccurate that they were obliged to discontinue his services in the distribution of their Fund. However, Mr. Baring went carefully into Mr. Clarke’s calculations, and concludes: ‘my original estimate of the loss of life is, after all, the correct one.’<sup>1</sup> Mr. Clarke had founded his calculation chiefly on the official registers. But Mr. Baring

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 1 (1877), p. 490.

had exposed the fallacy of this calculation in his original Report. 'I am informed,' he said, 'on good authority, that too great reliance cannot be placed on the official "noufous," as the population is usually understated in it, the inhabitants sending in false returns in order to escape taxation.' And in his supplementary Report he gives an instance that came to his knowledge in a particular place, where '131 males had been discovered who had escaped official registration; which fact sufficiently proves that little importance can be attached to these registers.' The people are taxed individually from the time of their birth to that of their death. Idiots, cripples, and paupers are drawn within the net of the tax collector, and the community as a whole must pay for its incapable members. The consequence is that in some districts the population is quite double that on the official register.<sup>1</sup>

Now those who have assailed Mr. Baring's estimate <sup>2</sup> of the victims of the Turkish massacres

<sup>1</sup> For the same reason the Christian population of Bulgaria is much larger than that put down in ordinary statistics.

<sup>2</sup> One of the assailants of Mr. Baring's accuracy is his present chief, Mr. Layard, who was in Spain when the Bulgarian



have done so on the ground that many of those who were missing when Mr. Baring made his estimate had subsequently returned. They forget, however, that Mr. Baring had also subsequently returned and made a second estimate entirely confirmatory of his first. But why do they think that many of those whom Mr. Baring had reckoned among the killed had 'returned'? Because, on making a house-to-house visitation in two or three places, they found the number of inhabitants almost equal to that on the official register. In others they found that Mr. Baring's estimate would diminish the number far below that of those actually living there. But the number actually living when Mr. Baring's critics made their calculations were probably not half the number actually living before the massacres. The 'missing' are in fact, for the most part, not persons who fled and then returned, but persons who were there all the time, though not on the official register. In short, Mr. Baring made his Report with a full consideration of all the facts. His

massacres took place, and for a whole year afterwards. He has tried to get rid of Mr. Baring's figures by the guesses of some unofficial persons.

critics, on the contrary, have based their calculation on imperfect and misleading data. The Exarch of Bulgaria has estimated the whole number of the Bulgarians who perished in the massacres at not less than 25,000, and I believe that his figures are not very far above the mark.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE TWO POLICIES COMPARED.

THE next point for our consideration is the attitude of our own Government towards the Bulgarian massacres. And when I speak of the Government, I mean especially the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary. They are, I believe, the only two members of the Cabinet who regularly see the foreign despatches ; while all the rest, except when questions of policy have to be decided, are thus obliged, like the public at large, to allow a wide margin to the discretion of the Premier and his Foreign Secretary.

We have seen that the Porte heard of the outbreak in Bulgaria on the day after it took place, and immediately despatched troops to suppress it. I have quoted a despatch from Sir H. Elliot, dated May 7, in which he states that 5,000 regulars had left for the scene of the disturbances. We have

also seen that the insurrection had been put down before May 9, and that the worst of the massacres took place between that date and the middle of May.

It was on June 23 that the English public received through the *Daily News* the first intimation of the Bulgarian atrocities. On the 26th questions were put to the Government in both Houses of Parliament. I give Mr. Disraeli's answer at length :

We have no information in our possession which justifies the statements to which the Right Honourable gentleman (Mr. W. E. Forster) refers. Some time ago, when troubles just commenced in Bulgaria, they appear to have begun by strangers entering the country and burning the villages without reference to religion or race. The Turkish Government at that time had no regular troops in Bulgaria, and the inhabitants, of course, were obliged to defend themselves. The persons who are called Bashi-bazouks and Circassians are persons who had settled in the country and had a stake in it. I have not the slightest doubt myself that the war, if you can call it a war, between the invaders and the Bashi-bazouks and Circassians was carried on with great ferocity. One can easily understand, under the circumstances under which these atrocities occurred, and with such populations, that that might happen. I am told that no quarter was given, and no doubt scenes took place which we

must all entirely deplore. But in the month of May the attention of Sir Henry Elliot was called to this state of things from some information which reached him, and he immediately communicated with the Porte, who at once ordered some regular troops to repair to Bulgaria, and steps to be taken by which the action of the Bashi-bazouks and Circassians might be arrested. That is all the information I have to give the Right Honourable gentleman on the subject, and I will merely repeat that the information which we have at various times received does not justify the statements in the journal (*Daily News*) which he has named.

I have three remarks to make on this statement. First, the accounts given in the *Daily News*, so far from not being 'justified' by the facts, were fully confirmed by the Reports of Messrs. Baring and Schuyler. Secondly, we have it on the authority of Mr. Disraeli, that Sir H. Elliot was acquainted with the state of facts in May, and 'immediately' prevailed on the Porte to send 'at once some regular troops'; only the regular troops, instead of 'arresting the action of the Bashi-bazouks and Circassians,' abetted them in their fiendish orgies. Thirdly, Mr. Disraeli was at this time under the impression that the Bashi-bazouks were a race of foreigners who, like the Circassians, 'had settled' in Bulgaria.

On July 10 Mr. Disraeli made another statement. This was a war, he said, 'not carried on by regular troops, in this case not even by irregular troops, but by a sort of *posse comitatus* of an armed population.' And this, in spite of his own accurate statement, three weeks previously, that the Porte, at Sir Henry Elliot's instance, had 'ordered some regular troops to repair to Bulgaria' in the beginning of May. He had previously defended the Circassians. It was now the turn of the Turks. They were 'an historical people who seldom have, I believe, resorted to torture, but generally terminate their connection with culprits in a more expeditious manner.' This ill-timed joke was greeted with 'laughter.'

Meanwhile the evidence respecting the Bulgarian atrocities was accumulating, and on July 18 Mr. Disraeli made another statement in answer to questions. The following extract will show its drift. He took the Circassians under his special patronage, and, after referring to their settlement in Bulgaria, he proceeded:—

These lands were in consequence portioned out to them in various parts of Turkey. These men have lived peaceably for twenty years. Their conduct has been



satisfactory, and there has been no imputation on them of savage or turbulent behaviour. They have cultivated farms and built villages, and during the whole period I think there has been no complaint of these men. But we know, of course, what Eastern populations are, and the Circassians are a very courageous and an armed population. Therefore, if their villages were burnt and their farms ravaged, it need not be a matter of surprise that they should take matters into their own hands and endeavour to defend themselves. In consequence of the state of affairs there—a guerilla war, local vengeance, and personal passions—there is no doubt that towards the end of May and so on scenes occurred of a description from which, with our feelings, we naturally recoil. But all this time our Consuls—and the House will soon have ample evidence of the fact—were in communication with the Ambassador, and the Ambassador was—I will not say remonstrating constantly with the Turkish Government, for the Turkish Government were most anxious to be guided by the advice of the British Ambassador—but he was using his influence with the Turkish Government to prevent, as much as he possibly could, these distressing scenes.

Let us compare this description of the pastoral simplicity and charming guilelessness of the Circassians with authentic facts. The *Times* Correspondent with the Turkish army in Roumelia, after some weeks' experience of Mr. Disraeli's *protégés*, describes them as 'snake-like fiends,' who lived on

robbery and murder.<sup>1</sup> 'The Circassians,' says Mr. Baring in his Report, 'have lived by robbery ever since they have been in the country.' My next witness is one whom even philo-Turks will respect. It is Petraki Effendi, the member for Rutschuk in the Turkish Parliament. In the sitting of February 7, after expressing his surprise that any one should be found to 'attempt the defence of these people, who were inexcusable before the whole world,' the speaker declared that 'their crimes were patent,' and that 'they are the principal cause of the present war.'<sup>2</sup>

I cannot listen to the defence of these malefactors. We all know their character, and it is painful to listen and painful to enter into further details concerning them. I served as assistant to the Governor of Widdin, and during a long period was a member of the administrative council. I therefore know every village in the district of Widdin, as well as the affairs of the vilayet. Consequently, I can give a circumstantial account of the evil the Circassians have done to the country better than any one else, because I was commissioned by the Government to survey the districts in question in the quality of inspector, and to make reports

<sup>1</sup> *Times* of February 8, 1878.

<sup>2</sup> This bold speech was one of the chief reasons why the Turkish Parliament has been dissolved. Those members who showed any signs of independence have been banished.

to the Sublime Porte on the acts and general behaviour of the Circassians. Now, I can give you the date of these Reports, with the names of the places from which they were addressed, and they ought still to be found at the Porte. The country some years ago listened to the appeal of the Government on behalf of the Circassians, and hastened to offer fraternal hospitality to these savages. We gave them land, cattle, seed, and food; we even built their habitations. [To be quite accurate, it is necessary to correct Petraki Effendi here. The Turkish Government compelled the Christians to build villages for the Circassians. The prime object of sending them into Bulgaria was to terrorise, and when the occasion required it, 'to diminish' the Christian population.] As a recompense for all this, these barbarians commenced to thief and steal—at first, it is true, trifling things, such as poultry, &c. This was the beginning of their exploits. Gradually, however, impunity and their inherent instinct for thieving combined, led them to seize hold of larger prey, and the sheep, cattle, horses, and buffaloes of the villagers were carried off constantly. You know the rest. It is not necessary to describe over again the massacres they have committed, the acts of pillage of which they are guilty, and their exploits in carrying off young Christian children and selling them into slavery. These are facts of public notoriety. All complaints which were made to the late Government, instead of being listened to, and the culprits receiving exemplary punishment, were left unheeded; the Government endeavoured to stifle complaints, to hide the truth, and to justify the Circassians in the eyes of the world. The result of this

policy has been most deplorable, and has led to the present war. As I said before, I say again, that the Circassians have been the cause of the present disastrous war. Those who take up the defence of these malefactors and thieves become, in so doing, their accomplices or agents (*yatak*).

Yet, according to Mr. Disraeli, 'these men have lived peaceably for twenty years. Their conduct has been satisfactory, and there has been no imputation on them of savage or turbulent behaviour. They have cultivated farms and built villages, and during the whole period there has been no complaint of these men.' But it may be pleaded that Mr. Disraeli was ignorant of the character of the Circassians. That would be surprising in so well-informed a man. But it is not ignorance which Mr. Disraeli professed, but knowledge. He gave the Circassians a character for good conduct, and declared that no complaint had been made against them for twenty years; and he referred in particular to the Reports of our own Consuls. In one of these Reports, which Mr. Disraeli had in his possession three weeks before he spoke, the Circassians are described as 'kidnapping the children of Bulgarians killed in the late affairs,' and as making the lives of their Christian neighbours generally

miserable.<sup>1</sup> In the same despatch Consul Reade gave an account of one of the worst of the massacres, on the authority of a Prussian engineer who was near the spot at the time, and of a Turk who had taken part in the massacre. When this Report—of a British Consul, be it remembered—was quoted in the House of Commons on the evening of July 31, the Prime Minister denounced it as ‘coffee-house babble.’ Yet he had despatches then, and for weeks, in his possession, testifying that the French and German Governments had authentic Reports confirming the worst accounts of the massacres.<sup>2</sup>

On the evening of August 11, Mr. Evelyn Ashley made a motion on the subject, which led to a lively debate in the House of Commons. That evening the Premier made his last speech in the House, and ceased to be Mr. Disraeli. He was still in the old vein. The gentle Circassians were heroically defending their invaded homesteads, and of course atrocities were unavoidable under the circumstances. But Her Majesty’s Government had been all through intimately ac-

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 3 (1876), pp. 333-4.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 6.



quainted with all the facts, and had done all that it was their duty to do :—

From the very commencement of these transactions the Ambassador was in constant communication with her Majesty's Minister, and that could be proved by the papers on the table. In May, and throughout June, the Ambassador is perpetually referring to the atrocities occurring in Bulgaria, to the repeated protests <sup>1</sup> he is making to the Turkish Government, and to his conversations with the Grand Vizier and others on the subject. The hon. and learned gentleman says that when questions were addressed to me in this House I was ignorant of what was occurring. That is exactly the question we have to decide. I say we were not, and that is the very point I am now calling attention to. I say that during all this period we were constantly receiving communications from Her Majesty's Ambassador informing us of what was occurring in Bulgaria, and apprising the Government of the steps he took to counteract evil consequences.

Let us now turn to Lord Derby. I do not quote his statements in Parliament, because they take the same rosy view of the situation in Bulgaria as the Premier's statements, *minus* the latter's idyllic flights in praise of Circassians and Bashibazouks. On July 14 a deputation, headed by

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the speech of July 18 (p. 109) : 'The Ambassador was—I will not say remonstrating constantly with the Turkish Government, for the Turkish Government was most anxious to be guided by the advice of the English Ambassador,' &c.



Mr. John Bright, waited on Lord Derby at the Foreign Office to sound him as to the policy of the Government on the Eastern Question. It was on this occasion that Lord Derby expressed a wish to be instructed by his 'employers.' The passage deserves to be quoted :—

I am very glad, and I think that any Minister who stands in my position would be glad, to know in time what your opinion and that of the country is. I have often thought that it is one of the most difficult parts of the duty of a Minister in a Parliamentary country that, being as he is in practice the servant of Parliament and of the public, as well as of the Queen, he does not always receive his instructions from his employers beforehand, but is left to guess what it is that they would desire him to do, and he only ascertains their real feeling when he finds that he has gone against it.

After this exordium Lord Derby proceeded to expound his view of the situation. Having surveyed all the points of the political compass, he delighted the deputation with an extremely optimistic picture of the prospects of Europe. Some of his utterances are remarkable, and I make no apology for giving them intact. I quote from the report in the *Times* of July 15 :—

We can see what is immediately before us—I do not know that all of us even do that—but it is very difficult

to judge of anything beyond the immediate present. But so far as it is possible for any one to forecast the future of events, I think it is the most improbable thing in the world that, in consequence of anything that is now passing within the limits of the Turkish Empire, a general European war should ensue. That seems to me one of those hypotheses which are so remote that it is scarcely worth while to speculate upon them. I do not see the quarter from which the war is to come.

France did not want war (he went on to say), nor Italy, nor Germany :—

There remain only ourselves, and Austria and Russia. Now, I cannot so insult your understandings as to speculate or to assume that there could be any one here who supposes that England wants to bring about a war. The very utmost, I think, to which any apprehensions have reached is a fear that, against our feelings and against our interest, we might be dragged into war. There is no party and no set of men in this country who would not regard a European war as the greatest of misfortunes.

He little dreamt then that the Government of which he is a member would surprise Parliament and the nation with a sudden demand for a war vote, and would now be straining every nerve to put two Army Corps on a war footing ; neither did he dream of the forcible passage of the Dardanelles by a British fleet in violation of treaty. But let us proceed with our quotations :—

Well, Austria has a position which is peculiar, and difficulties of her own. She has that dual system of administration which in her circumstances is, no doubt, a necessity, but which renders the difficulty of an enterprising and aggressive policy greater than it otherwise would be. She has within her Empire a great diversity of races, as we all know, and you may be quite sure that, if it is only in the interest of her own security, which any great convulsion in that part of Europe would disturb as much, or endanger almost as much as that of Turkey itself—you may be sure that, from reasons of self-interest, if from no others, the Austrian Government will not desire to break the peace.

This argument has lost none of its cogency by the evolution of events, as Lord Derby will find if he calculates on Austrian support in a warlike policy. But what about Russia? There was 'among a large part of the Russian population a strong sympathy for the insurgent movement which is going on in Turkey': —

But it is one thing to say that the party exists, and even that it is powerful, and it is another thing to say that the power of action is in its hands. If any one thing is certain in this world, it is certain that the Emperor of Russia, upon whose personal will and disposition more turns than upon that of any other man, is a sincere lover of peace. There are other reasons, such as the condition of Russian finance, the difficulties, perhaps greater than we are aware of here, of Russian administration, the

enormous cost of the late Asiatic conquests, and various other causes which I need not go into, which make an aggressive policy one at the present time utterly unsuited to the policy of the Russian Empire.

This confident opinion will not add to Lord Derby's reputation for political prescience. The other Powers had gravely warned him that in rejecting the Berlin Memorandum the British Government had taken a step that would inevitably force Servia and Montenegro into a war which would probably imperil the peace of Europe. Lord Derby, however, thought that everything would come all right if only everybody would agree to do nothing; and he fondly persuaded himself that he had succeeded in converting the other Powers to his own *dolce-far-niente* policy.

But some members of the deputation wished to have some more definite idea as to the policy of the Government. There was war between Turkey and the Principalities of Servia and Montenegro; there was also insurrection in Bosnia and the Herzegovina; and there was a reign of terror in Bulgaria. What did the Government propose to do?

As regards intervention between Turkey and the sub-

jects of the Porte, or 'between Turkey and the semi-independent States which form part of the Turkish Empire, that is a question which has never been so much as entertained. We will endeavour to impress that view upon others, and I have every reason to hope that we shall succeed. If, as it has been said, the Turkish Empire is in a state of decay from internal causes—that is a question upon which I pronounce no opinion,—but if that is so, it is clear that merely external assistance would be no remedy. The utmost that can be asked of us is to see fair play. We undertook undoubtedly twenty years ago to guarantee the sick man against murder, but we never undertook to guarantee him against suicide or sudden death. Now that, gentlemen, is in a few words our policy as regards this war now going on. We shall not intervene, we shall do our utmost, if necessary, to discourage others from intervening ; but I don't believe that under the present circumstances it will be necessary.

That is not a very noble policy ; but it is a very explicit one. Her Majesty's Government will make a ring round the combatants and 'see fair play ;' the combatants in Bulgaria and in Bosnia and the Herzegovina being, for the most part, on the one side, trained soldiers and—to quote Lord Derby's own phrase—'armed bands of murderers and robbers ;' on the other, a few badly armed men, goaded by cruelty into rebellion, and a multitude of women and children.



That, however, was Lord Derby's policy. 'Fair play' between the Turks and their defenceless subjects ; but intervention against the interference of a third party. The sheep might worry the wolf to death if they could ; or the brute might die of apoplexy ; and Lord Derby would not interfere. But no third party must enter the fold even for the purpose of saving the sheep. 'We shall do our utmost, if necessary, to discourage others from intervening.' 'Our utmost' meant war on behalf of the Turkish Government in the event of its being attacked by a foreign Power. This is clear, to my mind, from two of Lord Derby's despatches. On July 1, 1876, he wrote to Lord A. Loftus, our Ambassador at St. Petersburg :—

The Russian Ambassador called to-day and asked me whether, in the event of war breaking out between Turkey and Servia, Her Majesty's Government intended, as he had been led to believe, to adhere to a policy of strict and absolute non-intervention. I said that such was undoubtedly the case ; but that it must be clearly understood that Her Majesty's Government entered into no engagement to continue to abstain from intervention in the event (which, however, I could not assume as probable) of a different course being pursued by other Powers.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 3 (1876), p. 351.



Here is a tolerably plain hint that intervention by Russia against Turkey would be met by intervention by England in defence of Turkey. If anybody disputes that inference, I ask him how he interprets the following facts? The first is a telegraphic despatch from Lord Derby to Sir Henry Elliot :—

Foreign Office, August 29, 1876, 11.55 P.M.

I think it right to mention, for your guidance, that the impression produced here by events in Bulgaria has completely destroyed sympathy with Turkey. The feeling is universal, and so strong that even if Russia were to declare war against the Porte, Her Majesty's Government would find it practically impossible to interfere. Any such event would place England in a most unsatisfactory situation. Peace is therefore urgently necessary. Use your discretion as to the language which you shall hold; but you will see how essential it is that the Turkish Ministers should be alive to the situation, and that you cannot be too strong in urging upon the Porte a conciliatory disposition.

This was followed by a written despatch bearing the date of September 5. It runs as follows :—

It is my duty to inform you that any sympathy which was previously felt here towards that country (Turkey) has been completely destroyed by the recent lamentable occurrences in Bulgaria. The accounts of outrages and

excesses committed by the Turkish troops upon an unhappy, and for the most part, unresisting, population, has roused an universal feeling of indignation in all classes of English society ; and to such a pitch has this risen, that in the extreme case of Russia declaring war against Turkey, Her Majesty's Government would find it practically impossible to interfere in defence of the Ottoman Empire. Such an event, by which the sympathies of the nation would be brought into direct opposition to its Treaty engagements, would place England in a most unsatisfactory, and even humiliating position. Yet it is impossible to say that if the present conflict continues the contingency may not arise. The speedy conclusion of a peace, under any circumstances most desirable, becomes from these considerations a matter of urgent necessity. Her Majesty's Government leaves it to Your Excellency's discretion to choose the arguments which you shall employ ; but you will see from what I have stated how essential it is that the Turkish Ministers should be made alive to the position in which the conduct of their own authorities has placed them ; and you will understand that you are warranted in using the strongest language, should occasion require it, to enforce upon the Porte the expediency of a pacific policy, and of moderation in the terms to be proposed.<sup>1</sup>

That means, as plainly as the English language can express it, that, but for the autumn agitation, the Government would have gone to war against

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 1 (1877), p. 105.

Russia in the event of the latter Power intervening by arms on behalf of the oppressed Christians.

But perhaps I have forgotten the despatch of May 25? Not at all. Here it is:—

*The Earl of Derby to Sir H. Elliot.*

Foreign Office, May 25, 1876.

Sir,—In the course of the conversation with Musurus Pasha reported in my despatch of yesterday,<sup>1</sup> I took the opportunity of suggesting to his Excellency that it would be undesirable that the Turkish Government should misunderstand the attitude of Her Majesty's Government in regard to the proposals of the Berlin Conference.

Her Majesty's Government had declined to join in proposals which they thought ill-advised, but both the circumstances and the state of feeling in this country were very much changed since the Crimean war, and the Porte would be unwise to be led, by recollections of that period, to count upon more than the moral support of Her Majesty's Government in the event of no satisfactory solution of the present difficulties being found.

I merely suggested this in conversation, and carefully avoided pledging Her Majesty's Government to any line of policy.

I am, &c.

(Signed) DERBY.

The last paragraph clearly deprives this despatch of any value, especially when contrasted

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 3 (1876), p. 188.

with the very positive and decided language of the two despatches written three months afterwards. The unequivocal declaration of the two despatches of August and September must be taken to qualify the 'merely suggested' observation to Musurus Pasha in the previous May, and not the contrary. Besides, in 'carefully avoiding to pledge Her Majesty's Government to any line of policy,' Lord Derby left the door open for the policy of military intervention revealed in the ensuing August and September.

Here then, on August 29, 1876, we have the announcement by Lord Derby of a complete revolution in the policy of Her Majesty's Government. Down till then their policy was to prevent, if possible, the diplomatic intervention of any of the Powers in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire, and to resist by force of arms any attack by Russia on Turkey. Even to the very last day of the Parliamentary Session the Premier played, and Lord Derby fenced, with the question of the Bulgarian atrocities. At last came the powerful narrative of the massacre of Batak from the Special Correspondent of the *Daily News*, backed some days later by Mr. Schuyler's Report. A thrill of

horror vibrated through the whole nation, without distinction of parties, as Lord Derby bears witness. Meetings were suddenly held all over the country, at which demands were passionately made for coercing the Turks, for the recall of Sir Henry Elliot, and in some cases for a change of Government. But in most places there was a general desire to treat the question as outside the range of party politics, and Conservatives vied with Liberals in the energy of their platform denunciations.

Mr. Gladstone has been vehemently accused of having got up the agitation, inflamed the mind of the country, and embarrassed the Government. But let us look at the dates.

Down to the middle of August, 1876, the Government, as represented by the Premier and Lord Derby, stood, as we have seen, on the policy of opposing diplomatic intervention in the affairs of Turkey and of resisting by force of arms any attempt on the part of Russia to coerce the Porte into obedience to the demands of the Andrassy Note. Lord Derby, it is true, thought this policy a safe one. He had made up his mind that Russia, for financial and other reasons, was certain to shrink from war ; an occasional growl from the



British Lion, uttered through the medium of a speech or a despatch, being all that was necessary to keep the Russian Bear in order. This policy went down like a wall of pasteboard before the explosion of national feeling which followed the horrible revelation of the massacre of Batak; and Lord Derby had to proclaim a complete change of front. 'An universal feeling of indignation in all classes of English society' had 'placed England in a most unsatisfactory and even humiliating position ;' because, 'in the extreme case of Russia declaring war against Turkey, Her Majesty's Government would find it practically impossible to interfere in defence of the Ottoman Empire.' The result would be that 'the sympathies of the nation would be brought into direct opposition to its treaty engagements.'

It is clear that at this time Lord Derby believed that England was bound by the Treaty of Paris to take up arms in defence of the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire. This interpretation of the Treaty, however, he characteristically repudiated when it stood in the way of his altered policy.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Mark, my Lords, the words of that Treaty [of 1856], for they are important. We undertake to respect the in-



Now when was this collapse of policy announced? First, on August 29; and then, more emphatically, on the fifth of the following month. And when did Mr. Gladstone address the public? On Saturday, September 9, he delivered his Blackheath speech, and his pamphlet was published two days earlier. Were I to adopt the Premier's favourite phrase, I should be justified in characterizing the allegation, that Mr. Gladstone stirred up the agitation against Turkey, as 'an impudent fabrication.' But I prefer to give the facts, and leave the reader to pass judgment on them. Mr. Gladstone obstinately refused to speak or write upon the subject till the reports of the massacres in the *Daily News* were confirmed by official documents. It was not till the publication of Mr. Schuyler's report, confirming the worst that had been feared, that Mr. Gladstone made up his mind to break silence. And his speech and

tegrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire; . . . but there is no shadow of a promise to make non-observance by other Powers a *casus belli*. The words stop short of that; they carefully avoid any such pledge—in fact, they point directly to a different course of action. . . As far as that Treaty is concerned, therefore, we are in no sense bound by promise to fight for Turkey.'—*Lord Derby's Speech in the House of Lords*, Feb. 9, 1877.

pamphlet, so far from exciting the population, had a contrary effect. Hitherto they had been beating the air--flinging their denunciations broadcast, but having no definite aim before them. Mr. Gladstone gave them a policy, and by so doing calmed their anger without abating their enthusiasm. How moderate his policy reads now! 'Do not let us ask for,' he said, 'do not let us accept, Jonahs or scapegoats, either English or Turkish! It is not a change of men we want, but a change of measures. . . . In my hope and my opinion, when once the old illusions as to British sentiments are dispelled, and Lord Derby is set free, with his clear, impartial, and unostentatious character, to shape the course of the Administration, he will both faithfully and firmly give effect to the wishes of the country.'<sup>1</sup> Mr. Gladstone still clung to the wisdom of maintaining the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire, but qualified by the grant of vassal autonomy to the insurgent Provinces. The rapid current of events has borne us so far past Mr. Gladstone's proposals as to make most of us forget how very reasonable and moderate they were. It may be well, therefore, to recall them in his own words:—

<sup>1</sup> *Bulgarian Horrors*, p. 48.

Russia has in late years done much to estrange the Greek Christians of the Levant : and the Slavs will, we may be sure, be at least as ready to accept help from Powers which are perforce more disinterested, as from Powers that may hereafter hope and claim to be repaid for it in political influence or supremacy. It is surely wise, then, to avail ourselves of that happy approach to unanimity which prevails among the Powers, and to avert, or at the very least postpone, as long as we honourably can, the wholesale scramble which is too likely to follow upon any premature abandonment of the principle of territorial integrity for Turkey. I, for one, will avoid even the infinitesimal share of responsibility, which alone could now belong to any of my acts or words, for inviting a crisis, of which at this time the dimensions must be large, and may be almost illimitable.<sup>1</sup>

This is expanded as follows in the speech at Blackheath :—

I am in favour of retaining that [Sultan's] suzerainty, if we can retain it consistently with the great paramount end in view ; because I am afraid the harmony of the Courts and Powers of Europe would be too severely strained were there a quantity of territorial plunder going and it came to a question of the distribution of spoils. Now if any one asks me how I would distribute the spoils, my answer would be this : I would not distribute them at all. Those provinces were not destined to be the property of Russia, or of Austria, of England ; they were

<sup>1</sup> *Bulgarian Horrors*, p. 53.

destined for the inhabitants of the provinces themselves. They have the best right to them, they can make the best use of them. . . . I say therefore, let our measures be as mild as they may be, but, for God's sake, let them be effectual measures. If it can be done by a Foreign Commission<sup>1</sup> which shall, without absolutely displacing the Turkish authorities, take the government of these provinces virtually into their own hands, let it be so done. I myself lean to the simpler method of saying to the Turk—which I believe to be very good terms for him :—‘ You shall receive a reasonable tribute, you shall retain your titular sovereignty, your Empire shall not be invaded ; but never again, while the years shall roll upon their course, so far as it is in our power to determine, never again shall the hands of violence be raised by you ; never again shall the flood-gates of lust be opened by you ; never again shall the dire refinements of cruelty be devised by you, for the sake of making mankind miserable in Bulgaria.’<sup>2</sup>

This meant ‘the extinction of the Turkish / executive power in Bulgaria.’

Let the Turks now carry away their abuses in the only possible manner, namely by carrying off themselves. Their Zaptiehs and their Mudirs, their Bimbashis and their Yuzbachis, their Kaimakams and their Pashas one and all, bag and baggage, shall, I hope,

<sup>1</sup> Lord Stratford de Redcliffe's proposal.

<sup>2</sup> *Speech*, pp. 22-3.

clear out from the province they have desolated and profaned.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Gladstone accordingly urged with all his eloquence and argumentative skill the true wisdom on the part of England of acting cordially and loyally with the other Powers, and in particular, of securing a good understanding with Russia :—

The union of them all is not only important, but almost indispensable for entire success and satisfaction. Yet there are two of these great Powers whose position is such that just now they stand forth far above the rest in authority, and in the means of effectively applying that authority, as well as in responsibility, upon this great

<sup>1</sup> *Bulgarian Horrors*, p. 61. This passage has been persistently perverted into a proposal to turn the Turks out of Europe? Even so well-informed a man as Mr. Grant Duff says, in the *Nineteenth Century* of this month (March), that Mr. Gladstone ‘proposed that his [the Turk’s] Government should be expelled *from Europe*, bag and baggage.’ Europe and Bulgaria are not quite the same thing. With regard to Mr. Grant Duff’s own proposal; viz., that the Duke of Edinburgh should be made the king of a reconstructed Greek kingdom, having Constantinople for its capital; there is one serious objection which Mr. Grant Duff seems to have overlooked. There *is* a King of Greece *de facto* and *de jure*, whose Queen also is a Romanoff, and who has ruled his subjects well. What would Mr. Grant Duff do with him? In the very paragraph which has been so perverted Mr. Gladstone insists on the duty of doing justice to ‘the Mahomedan minority,’ who would remain in Bulgaria when the military and civil authorities were withdrawn.



question. Those two Powers are England and Russia. I wish, above all things, to be plain and distinct with you. It may be in the power of any of these six important States to mar and to frustrate the wise settlement of this question ; but undoubtedly it is in the power either of England or of Russia to make a good settlement impossible. And, moreover, if there be so bad an inclination in them, it is in the power of either not only to make a good settlement impossible, but to do that with impunity. If we were wicked enough to prevent this great good, nobody could punish us for our misconduct. The Almighty, who has said ‘vengeance is mine,’ will take his own time for settling the account. The same is the case with Russia, if Russia entertains the diabolical schemes, or even the ordinarily selfish schemes, which many people are so fond of imputing to her. I am not such a dreamer as to suppose that Russia, more than other countries, is exempt from all selfish ambition. But she has also within her the pulse of humanity, and for my part I believe it is the pulse of humanity that is at this epoch throbbing almost ungovernably in her people. Now, be assured that a really good settlement of this question depends, not upon a mere hollow truce between England and Russia, but upon their thorough concord, their hearty and cordial co-operation. Their joint power is immense. The power of Russia by land of acting upon these countries as against Turkey is at the present time probably resistless. The power of England by sea is scarcely less important at this moment ; for, I ask, what would be the condition of the Turkish army if the British Admiral now in Besika Bay were to inform the



Government in Constantinople that from a given hour, until atonement had been made, until punishment had descended, until outrage had been effectually arrested, not a man, not a gun, not a horse, not a boat should cross the waters of the Bosporos, or the cloudy Euxine, or the bright Ægean, to carry aid to the Turkish troops? . . . Why should we not act with Russia for good? Why should we not reserve suspicion and resentment for the time when they are justified by some acts of hers, and not merely stirred up by old and invidious recollections? <sup>1</sup>

And in his pamphlet he said :—<sup>2</sup>

The time has come for us to emulate Russia in her good deeds, and to reserve our opposition *until she shall visibly endeavour to turn them to evil account.*

It has been said that Mr. Gladstone's part in the agitation against the Turkish Government was deprecated and condemned by the recognised leaders of his party. The truth, however, is, that Mr. Gladstone took the lead of the agitation—it is one of the penalties of transcendent genius to take the lead when it acts at all—not only under pressure from all parts of the country, but after consultation with the leaders of his party ; and Lord Granville went down with him to Blackheath and sat by his side while he addressed the vast crowd which came to hear him. Lord Hartington went

<sup>1</sup> *Speech at Blackheath*, pp. 25-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 58.

to Turkey to study the question on the spot ; and on his return he took an early opportunity of declaring his views. What these views were, a few extracts from his able speech at Keighley,<sup>1</sup> on the evening of Nov. 3, 1876, will show :—

Time after time the Turks have shown themselves perfectly willing to adopt the liberal language of enlightened Europe, and have poured forth a perfect torrent of reform, but upon paper and upon paper only. The numerous promises they have made to their unfortunate subjects—promises embodying identical reforms—constitute in themselves so many proofs that former promises had not been kept, and I believe, as a matter of fact, that it may be shown that scarcely one of the promises of the Turkish Government to its own subjects has in any essential particular been observed. Well, then, gentlemen, if such is the case, if the Turks have been and are incapable—have been historically proved incapable—of effecting for themselves the necessary reforms, and of securing to themselves the necessary protection, does it not follow that if it is an object to Europe, and to us more especially amongst all the States of Europe, that the Christians should be protected, and that Turkey should be well governed, and if we, of all the States of Europe, are more especially bound by special claims and obligations to secure good government to the subjects of Turkey and equal treatment to all the races living under her rule—does it not follow, I say, if all this be the case,

<sup>1</sup> Report in the *Times* of November 4.

that it is necessary that we should go beyond the promises of the Porte, and that we should in some way or other, be it more or less, apply some external and foreign interference, in order to secure the good government and protection which Turkey herself is unable to provide? I want to show you that Europe has been slowly coming to this opinion. I want to show you that up to a very recent period our Government had not come to that opinion, and I want to show you that if it has come to that opinion, it is very doubtful whether it has embraced it frankly and fully, and whether without some pressure from you it is prepared to act fully upon it. . . . But, however that may be, I may say that I was not astonished, or that I at all regret the outburst of indignation that took place on the receipt of the news of these atrocities. Then for the first time the eyes of England were opened to the real character of the Government of Turkey. Up to that time the majority of us had been rejoicing rather than otherwise in having gained what was considered a diplomatic triumph. We had done something to foil the designs of the enemies of Turkey, and to preserve and uphold the traditional policy of England. But all of a sudden these Bulgarian massacres and horrors came upon the public like a revelation, and opened their eyes to the true character of the Government we had supported. . . . But, gentlemen, there is no doubt that that agitation was not only honourable to the people of this country, but also it was of great service in one direction. It convinced the Government, if they needed to be convinced, that they could not rely upon the support of the people of this country in the maintenance of the Turkish

Government, unless they could show adequate means for the reform of abuses, for the protection of the Christians, and adequate security against the recurrence of such outrages.

Lord Hartington had conversed with the leading statesmen of Turkey, and the impression which he carried home with him from Constantinople is frankly expressed in the following emphatic warning :—

‘ Probably, they say, Russia is our enemy. England, not from love of us, but from jealousy of Russia, is our friend ; the rest of Europe is divided. Come whatever may, Russia will be against us, but in the end England will be for us. The rest of Europe may be one on one side and one on the other ; but at all events the chances are equal.’ Now, gentlemen, that I believe to be the opinion which really exists at the bottom of the hearts of a great many of the Turkish statesmen. It is a very dangerous frame of mind for Turkish statesmen to be in, and yet can we be altogether surprised that they should hold such opinions? Our policy for a great number of years, our traditional policy, the policy of parties, has been such as to encourage such a belief in their minds. If a great change has lately taken place in the feelings and opinions of the people of England, it is not likely their statesmen will examine too closely the phases of the changes of English public opinion. Will they not more willingly take it from the utterances of the English Ministers, and are they to be blamed if they think their

safest inspiration will be derived from the mouth of the Prime Minister? I say let Lord Derby write whatever despatches he pleases ; let Sir Henry Elliot make whatever representations he pleases to the Porte ; and then let Lord Beaconsfield afterwards get up and make one of his speeches, in which he denounces vehemently the enemies of Turkey, in which he denounces in unmeasured terms English statesmen who have committed no crime of which I am aware—except that of expressing their own warm and strong opinions, and representing the opinions of a great portion of their fellow-countrymen—I say let Lord Beaconsfield get up and make one of his speeches, and talk in terms more or less clear about the interests of England, and I say that the interpretation put on that speech in Constantinople is that when Lord Beaconsfield speaks of the interests of England he is thinking of the intrigues of Russia. Let Lord Derby write as he may, it will be believed in Turkey that the policy of England is still what it has always been, and that, come what may, when the struggle comes England will be still at her back.

Server Pasha's recent appeal to the people of England, and his passionate denunciation of Lord Beaconsfield and Mr. Layard for having deceived the Turks, are an appropriate commentary on Lord Hartington's neglected warning.

But some persons, more remarkable for skill in finesse than for solid convictions, appeared to change their minds. Did Lord Hartington? The



following extracts from his speech at the opening of the Parliamentary Session of 1877 will supply the answer.

At the time there came authentic accounts of the suppression of the insurrection in Bulgaria there would have been nothing inconsistent with the declaration of the Government if they had given active assistance to Turkey. The interests of England had been ostentatiously announced on all occasions. The interests of England appeared to be the principle of the policy of Her Majesty's Government. Well, it was to prevent the possibility of England going to war, or giving material assistance in defence of the Turkish Empire, that the agitation of the autumn arose. If there were any exaggerations, as is alleged, in that agitation; if there were any unjust imputations upon the Government; if there was any unnecessary disposition to assume to *ourselves*<sup>1</sup> the responsibility of putting everything to rights, the Government were mainly, if not altogether, responsible. The Government had declared that the accounts which had been received of the Bulgarian atrocities were untrue. The Government had unnecessarily made themselves the defenders of the Turkish Government, and even in the height of the agitation the Prime Minister inflamed it to a far higher pitch. For in that speech at Aylesbury, to which I have referred, he denounced the leaders of the agitation, he denounced Servia, he denounced the Secret Societies, he denounced everything except the Turkish Government.

<sup>1</sup> By this expression alone Lord Hartington placed himself on the side of the agitators.



A very few months elapsed, and all Europe perceived that the Servian cause . . . was the cause of the oppressed nationalities of Turkey, and that there could be no settlement of this question and no permanent peace until the grievances under which those oppressed nationalities laboured were removed. . . I do not think it is necessary I should say more with reference to the great and remarkable agitation in this country last autumn. If there are those who think that agitation a mischievous one, I will only remind them of what was said upon the matter by a member of the Government.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Hartington proceeded to quote a passage from a speech of Lord Carnarvon's during the agitation, to which I shall refer in its proper place.

In a speech delivered at Edinburgh on the 6th of last November,<sup>2</sup> Lord Hartington criticised the political situation in the following language. Speaking of the policy of the Government, he said :—

I am quite willing to admit that they have preached peace—in season and out of season they have preached peace ; but, as Lord Derby has told you, they have preached it with the conviction in their hearts the whole time that they were striving in vain, because they knew that peace could not be preserved. And why, gentlemen,

<sup>1</sup> *Times*, February 9, 1877

<sup>2</sup> *Times*, November 7, 1877.

did they arrive at that opinion? Because they knew that the *status quo* in Turkey could not be maintained—at least, could not be maintained without war, and yet it seems to me that because they thought that the *status quo* in Turkey was the condition of things most conducive to English interests, they never co-operated heartily in any of the attempts made by the other Powers of Europe to bring about some alteration in the condition of the Turkish Provinces without recourse to war. Well, gentlemen, I do not want to criticise the Government policy of the past; it is a far more important thing for us to consider whether they fully understand the position of things now, and I must say, from my imperfect means of judging of the opinions of the Cabinet, I do not think they are very reassuring. We heard Sir Stafford Northcote one day declaring that he thought he saw what he called a little blue sky, and that there was a possibility of peace being restored. Well, then, why did he think so? Why? Because he said both parties had shown a great deal of valour and a great deal of courage, and had covered themselves with honour in the war; that the honour of both might be satisfied; and if they could arrange their differences they might do so with honour to both parties. If I were to agree with Sir Stafford Northcote that it was only a question of arranging differences, and that they have only fallen out about trifles that can be easily made up as soon as their honour is satisfied, it seems to me I should be taking a most false and inadequate view of the state of things; and that any efforts they may make to bring about a restoration of European peace upon the basis of what Sir Stafford Northcote calls settling their

differences, will be so much time and trouble thrown away.

I have already referred to Lord Granville's open approval of Mr. Gladstone's share in the agitation. He also agreed in Mr. Gladstone's policy of coercion, as his speeches in the House of Lords and elsewhere prove. I am reluctant to weary the reader with extracts, and shall therefore quote the evidence of two distinguished witnesses to show that on the question of coercing the Turks Lord Granville and Mr. Gladstone were agreed. Speaking at Bradford on the 11th of last October, Lord Salisbury referred as follows to Lord Granville :—

But what he and others have quite recently maintained is that we ought to have gone with the other nations of Europe and imposed the decisions of the Conference upon the Turk.<sup>1</sup>

In his speech in the House of Lords on February 20, 1877, Lord Beaconsfield said :—

‘The noble Lord (Granville) and his friends are of opinion that we should have coerced the Porte into the acceptance of the policy which we recommend.’

It is unnecessary to quote the Duke of Argyll.

<sup>1</sup> *Times*, October 12, 1877.

Not only did he personally take an active part in the agitation, but he went even beyond Mr. Gladstone in pressing the policy of coercion.

So much for the vehement accusations against Mr. Gladstone of having got up the anti-Turk agitation, and advocated a policy of coercion in opposition to the feelings and wishes of the leaders as well as of the rank and file of the Liberal party. For myself, I humbly think that it would have been better to have put the policy of coercion to the test of a Parliamentary vote. Of course it would have been defeated, not only by Tory but also by some Liberal votes. There are Liberals whose minds, it seems, are so disciplined by philosophy that they think it unmanly to feel deeply for human suffering, and foolish to run any risk in championing the down-trodden and oppressed. There are other Liberals who hate, 'not wisely but too well,' one despotism in particular more than they love freedom in general. I am no politician, and have no knowledge of party tactics, and perhaps it was wise to avoid giving these Liberals an excuse for retiring into an anti-Russian cave of Adullam. That the country was at one time enthusiastic in favour of a policy of

coercion—which really meant a policy of peace—no one who carefully watched the indications of public opinion can doubt. But what is true of individuals is also true of parties and of Governments.

There is a tide in the affairs of men  
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;  
Omitted, all the voyage of their life  
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.

It would be unjust, however, to appropriate to the Liberals all the credit of condemning the Bulgarian atrocities, and advocating a policy which would make the recurrence of them impossible. In the month of October 1876 Lord Carnarvon spoke of the agitation in the following terms:—

He certainly had no wish to complain of the public feeling which the late thrill of horror had elicited. He did not disagree, if he rightly understood it, with the public feeling and opinion because it had been somewhat loudly expressed, and that here and there might have been exaggeration in the language used. He rejoiced, on the contrary, to believe that the heart of his countrymen beat so soundly as it did when such a tale of horror was unfolded. He rejoiced that there was neither delay nor hesitation in the expression of that feeling; and so far from weakening the hands of the Government, he

believed that, if rightly understood at home and abroad, nothing could more strengthen the hands of his noble friend the Foreign Secretary than the burst of indignation which had gone through the length and breadth of the land.

In the end of September, 1876, a crowded meeting was held in the Guildhall, under the presidency of a Tory Lord Mayor, to protest against the Bulgarian atrocities, and demand guarantees against Turkish misrule. Lord Salisbury was invited to attend. He excused himself on the reasonable ground of his official position ; but, in doing so, took care to express his sympathy with the object of the meeting. I think myself entitled therefore to claim Lord Salisbury also as one who regarded the agitation with benevolence.

The Guildhall meeting sent a deputation to carry their resolutions to Lord Derby. The deputation was headed by the Lord Mayor, and by the Right Hon. J. G. Hubbard, one of the Conservative members for the City. In introducing the deputation the Lord Mayor said :—

The atrocities had forced on the hand of diplomacy, and, he would add, that the hand of Providence had pointed to them in the hope that the Christian peoples would take up the cause of the scattered Christian



populations of the East, and bring about, through the power and intelligence of England and of the English Government, a more benign, a more merciful, and a more Christian government of those people who were under the government of the Turkish Empire.<sup>1</sup>

Sir Stafford Northcote, speaking at Edinburgh on September 18, 1876, said :—

We have long known it was our duty—we accept that duty ; we accept it as freely as any of those who challenged us could wish—to fulfil the moral obligation into which this country entered by the treaty of 1856, at the close of the Crimean War, to use its efforts to protect the Christians of the Turkish Provinces from misgovernment. We know now from the terrible emphasis with which these words have been spoken from Bulgaria what the misgovernment of Turkey means ; and be assured that the revelations which have been made have in no degree weakened the sense of duty with which we have been impressed. We know it is a question which must be dealt with firmly and vigorously.<sup>2</sup>

This justifies me in claiming the Conservative leader of the House of Commons as a sympathiser with the agitation and an advocate for ‘ dealing firmly and vigorously ’ with the Turkish Government.

Thus we see that down to the latter half of

<sup>1</sup> *Times*, September 28, 1876.

<sup>2</sup> *Times*, September 19, 1876.

September, 1876, the Eastern Question was treated on all sides as outside the pale of party politics. Mr. Gladstone's pamphlet and Blackheath speech were either altogether approved or respectfully discussed by the Tory press of London; and Tory orators quoted Mr. Gladstone with approbation at public meetings.<sup>1</sup> But the 'great neutral figure in English politics'<sup>2</sup> was in the meantime watching all this exhibition of English feeling in sullen silence. At last his opportunity came. At an agricultural meeting at Aylesbury on September 20, Lord Beaconsfield delivered his opinion on the autumn agitation, and on Mr. Gladstone's conduct in relation to it. 'It would,' he admitted, 'be affectation for him to pretend that he was backed by the country.' 'Unhappily a great portion of the people of this country, prompted by feelings which have drawn their attention to these extraneous matters, have arrived at a conclusion which, in the

<sup>1</sup> There was one exception to this unanimity. The *Pall Mall Gazette* cursed Mr. Gladstone and the agitation from the very first, and declared that in the 'irrepressible struggle for empire,' England was bound to uphold the Turkish Empire, while admitting that to do so was to uphold a system which inevitably produced horrors like those of Batak. See *Pall Mall Gazette* of August 30, 1876.

<sup>2</sup> Description of Lord Beaconsfield by a writer in *Blackwood's Magazine*.

opinion of Her Majesty's Government, if carried into effect, would alike be injurious to the permanent and important interests of England and fatal to any chance of preserving the peace of Europe.' Well, Lord Beaconsfield carried his own policy; and what does he now think about 'the permanent and important interests of England,' and the 'chance of preserving the peace of Europe'? If he had co-operated loyally with the other Powers the peace of Europe would never have been broken. But he chose to place England in what his admirers called a proud, and others a perilous isolation; and the result is that we are at this moment either hated or distrusted by every nation in Europe. But let us return to Lord Beaconsfield's Aylesbury speech.

Mr. Gladstone has lately been attacked by official writers and speakers for having made a personal attack on Lord Beaconsfield at Oxford. Mr. Gladstone made no personal attack on Lord Beaconsfield. He did not assail his character nor asperse his motives. He attacked his policy, and confessed that he had been doing his best for two years to counteract it. But the friends of Lord Beaconsfield are hardly the persons to declaim

against the iniquity of personal attacks. If ever a man clove his way to power by the tomahawk and scalping knife of savage warfare, that man is the present Prime Minister of England. His speeches against the late Sir Robert Peel are charged from first to last with personal rancour. Imputation of bad motives has ever been his readiest weapon of party warfare. It was therefore in keeping with his antecedents that he should, in the Aylesbury speech attack Mr. Gladstone's character in the following strain :

The danger at such a moment is that designing politicians may take advantage of such sublime sentiments, and may apply them to the furtherance of their sinister ends. I do not think there is any language which can denounce too strongly conduct of this description. He who at such a moment would avail himself of such a commanding sentiment in order to obtain his own individual ends, suggesting a course which he may know to be injurious to the interests of his country, and not favourable to the welfare of mankind, is a man whose conduct no language can too strongly condemn. He outrages the principle of patriotism, which is the soul of free communities. He does more—he influences in the most injurious manner the common welfare of humanity. Such conduct, if it be pursued by any man at this moment, ought to be indignantly reprobated by the people of England ; for, in

the general havoc and ruin which it may bring about, it may, I think, be fairly described as worse than any of those Bulgarian atrocities which now occupy attention.<sup>1</sup>

In other words, Mr. Gladstone is a greater criminal for having denounced the Bulgarian atrocities than Chefkets Pasha and his accomplices are for having committed them! The day after the Aylesbury speech Lord Derby wrote his famous despatch in denunciation of Chefkets and his partners in guilt. The speech and the despatch reached Constantinople together, and were doubtless read at the same time by the Sultan and his ministers. What effect were they calculated, nay, certain to produce? Was it in human nature to believe in the sincerity of a Government whose Foreign Secretary demanded punishment for the authors of the Bulgarian atrocities, while the head of the Government had on the previous day publicly accused Mr. Gladstone of more criminal conduct than even the objects of Lord Derby's denunciation?

The Aylesbury speech gave the cue to Conservative speakers and newspapers, and the Eastern Question became henceforth a party question, and Mr. Gladstone a target for scurrilous vituperation.

<sup>1</sup> *Lord Beaconsfield's Speech at Aylesbury*, published by authority, pp. 8-9.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE CONFERENCE OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

THE nomination of Lord Salisbury to the post of Special Plenipotentiary at Constantinople afforded an opportunity of raising the Eastern Question once more out of the ruts of party politics. The appointment was hailed with satisfaction by the whole of the Liberal press throughout the country, and by every Liberal speaker who had occasion to refer to it. The only voice raised against it, as far as I remember, was that of the *Pall Mall Gazette*.

At the point at which we have now arrived the relative position of parties is as follows.

On one side are Austria, Germany, Russia, France, Italy, all agreed upon three points : first, that the true cause of the disturbances in Turkey is the atrocious mis-government of the Porte ; secondly, that some mode of self-government for the dis-



turbed provinces is a *sine quâ non* of peace ; thirdly, that the promises of the Turkish Government are absolutely worthless without effectual guarantees, and that consequently coercion, in some shape or other, is necessary. This statement is capable of demonstration out of the Blue Books, as I shall now show.

In the end of August, 1876, the Italian Government proposed to that of Austria that the Powers, having formulated their demands, should present them in a Collective Note to Turkey. On hearing of this, Sir Henry Elliot telegraphed in hot haste to Lord Derby that he 'thinks the Italian proposal of a Collective Note very objectionable.'<sup>1</sup> Lord Salisbury, on his way to Constantinople, had an interview 'with Signor Melegari, the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, and discussed with him the present grave state of affairs in the East. His Excellency began by emphatically expressing the opinion that the conscience of Christendom would not be satisfied unless effective guarantees were provided for the better government of the Christian populations of Turkey. . . . *His Excellency went on to express the opinion, upon which he insisted*

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 1 (1877), p. 91.

*with much force, that the action of the Powers ought not to be derived from, or limited by, the Treaty of Paris.* They ought to be unrestricted in their search for a solution of the questions to be submitted to the Conference by any obligations imposed by that Treaty, and he was not prepared to admit that the Porte would be at liberty to reject any decisions to which the Conference might come.'<sup>1</sup>

On September 26, 1876, the Russian Government made a proposal, which is recorded as follows in a despatch from Lord Derby to Sir Henry Elliot :—

The Russian Ambassador called upon me this afternoon, and communicated to me in strict confidence a despatch from Prince Gortchakoff, stating that the Russian Government wished to propose to those of England and Austria that in the event of the Porte refusing the conditions of peace which had now been offered them [administrative autonomy of a very restricted kind for the disturbed provinces] the following measures should be taken : (1) the occupation of Bosnia by an Austrian force ; (2) the occupation of Bulgaria by a Russian force ; (3) the entrance of the united fleets of all nations into the Bosphorus. Prince Gortchakoff says that he believes the threat of taking these measures would

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 2 (1877), p. 19.

be sufficient to accomplish those objects. It would force the Porte to accept the terms proposed to it ; it would avert war ; and it would ensure the better treatment of the Eastern Christians.

In a second despatch the Russian Chancellor states that when Count Schouvaloff makes this confidential communication to me he is authorised to add that if, in my opinion, the entry of the united fleets into the Bosphorus would be preferable alone, and sufficient for the object in view, the Russian Government are ready to consent to this course, and will abstain from making the two other propositions mentioned above.<sup>1</sup>

What could have been more moderate and conciliatory than this ? Russia had no fleet at hand to participate in the proposed naval demonstration in the Bosphorus, whereas England had on the spot a fleet more powerful than those of the other Powers combined. What Russia, therefore, in fact proposed was that Constantinople should be practically occupied by a force of which England would take the lead, and in which Russia would have no part at all, or, at the best, a very subordinate part. This is not only a proof of the disinterested character of the Russian policy ; it shows at the same time how little disposed

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 1 (1877), p. 317-18.

Russia then was to reciprocate our unworthy jealousy and suspicion.

The policy of ordering the united fleets into the Bosphorus was cordially approved by the Austrian Government. Our Ambassador at Vienna asked whether Count Andrassy 'expected that the Government of the Sultan would permit a fleet, evidently intended for a hostile purpose, to pass the Dardanelles unresisted.' The answer was that 'he thought resistance improbable, since to oppose the passage of such a fleet would be to declare war against united Europe.'<sup>1</sup>

Not satisfied with this, Count Andrassy sent a despatch to London to urge on Lord Derby, that 'it is not sufficient to obtain the conclusion of an armistice [with Servia and Montenegro]. It becomes of the highest importance that conditions of peace should be agreed upon without delay by the Powers, *and enforced by them on the Porte*.'<sup>2</sup>

The German Government also agreed, and were even 'disposed to advocate larger concessions to the insurgent provinces in the direction of autonomy,' than those proposed by Lord Derby.

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 1 (1877), pp. 405-6. Cf. p. 472.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 240.

‘M. de Bülow,’ says the British Chargé d’Affaires at Berlin, ‘again referred to the necessity of effectively providing for the future of the Christian populations; and, if I mistake not, he is in favour of making larger concessions in the direction of autonomy. His last words to me on this occasion were: “Some radical measures must be taken to rescue these poor people from their wretched condition.”’

We have already seen how earnest the French Government was in advocating the same policy. It pressed and implored Lord Derby to accept the Berlin Memorandum, and Lord Derby and Lord Beaconsfield have stated repeatedly that they rejected the Berlin Memorandum mainly because it pointed to coercion in case of the Porte’s refusal.

We did not think that it was our duty to give our assent to that document, and why? Because it called upon Turkey to accomplish objects which were, in the then state of the country, impossible; and in case of their not being achieved it intimated ulterior measures which could bear no other interpretation but the military occupation of Turkey. That military occupation would have been a violation of those great treaties whose provisions were guiding us. That military occupation would have been the violation of the independence and of the terri-

torial integrity of the country. Under these circumstances Her Majesty's Government, in pursuance of the object they had before them, declined to sanction the Memorandum.<sup>1</sup>

If we accepted the Memorandum we should have bound ourselves to concur in those 'efficacious measures' by which diplomatic action would be supported; and I think the experience we have since had excludes any reasonable doubt that what was meant was that we should join in a military occupation. To that policy we did not assent.<sup>2</sup>

Both the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary thus admit, that to sanction the Berlin Memorandum was to join in a policy of coercion against the Porte. But all the other Powers accepted the Berlin Memorandum: therefore, by the confession of Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Derby, all the other Powers advocated a policy of coercion. It is unnecessary to carry the proof further.

So much as to the acts and intentions of Austria, Germany, Russia, France, and Italy. Down to the eve of the Conference they had acted loyally together, and were agreed on the following points:—

<sup>1</sup> *Lord Beaconsfield's Guildhall Speech*, November 9, 1876.

<sup>2</sup> *Speech of Lord Derby in House of Lords*, February 8, 1877.



1. That the root of all the evil was the atrocious misrule of the Porte.

2. That radical reforms in the Turkish administration were necessary.

3. That the Western Powers had a right to interfere between the Sultan and his Christian subjects, and to enforce the execution of the reforms which they might deem necessary.

4. That, in the interests of humanity and of the peace of Europe, it was expedient to coerce the Porte into obedience to the will of Europe, in case pacific efforts failed.

Down to the end of August, 1876, on the other hand, the position of Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Derby was as follows :—

1. That the insurrections in Bosnia, the Herzegovina, and Bulgaria 'was but a petty local disturbance,'<sup>1</sup> caused, in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, by the intrigues of Austrian officials and the connivance of the Austrian Government ;<sup>2</sup> in the case of Bulgaria, by 'secret societies,'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Lord Derby's Speech in House of Lords*, February 20, 1877.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Lord Beaconsfield's Aylesbury Speech.*

whose emissaries had invaded the mild Circassians and the gentle Bashi-bazouks.

2. That radical reforms were to be deprecated, the proper remedy being the summary suppression of the insurrection by Turkish troops.<sup>1</sup>

3. That it was the duty of Her Majesty's Government to oppose all diplomatic intervention in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>2</sup>

4. That any coercive intervention against Turkey must be met, on the part of England, by forcible intervention in defence of the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>3</sup>

In the end of August, 1876, Lord Derby frankly owned, as we have seen, that the policy of the Government was completely frustrated by the autumn agitation. In the event of Russia making war on Turkey, the English Government, he said, could no longer take up arms for the Porte. And this he considered a 'humiliating' fact. For a time, accordingly, Lord Derby yielded to the stream and gave in his adhesion to a policy not of intervention merely, but of coercion, towards the

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 2 (1876), p. 96. Cf. p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* No. 2, p. 8; No. 3, p. 174.

<sup>3</sup> *Turkey*, No. 3 (1876), p. 351; No. 1 (1877), p. 105.

Turkish Government. In a despatch to Sir Henry Elliot, dated September 22, 1876, he 'intimated that an effective reform of the administration of the disturbed Provinces, with securities for its proper execution, was a condition on which the mediating Powers must INSIST *as necessary to a full and satisfactory pacification*.'<sup>1</sup> I will not do Lord Derby the injustice of supposing that he used words without weighing their meaning. To 'insist' means to carry your point in spite of opposition, and I leave hair-splitters to distinguish between that and 'coercion.'

Let us now see what Lord Derby meant by 'an effective reform of the administration of the disturbed Provinces.' I quote the following account of it from the 'Instructions' of the Government to Lord Salisbury on the eve of his departure for Constantinople:—

(a). The *status quo*, speaking roughly, both as regards Servia and Montenegro.

(b). That the Porte should simultaneously undertake, in a Protocol to be signed at Constantinople with the representatives of the mediating Powers, to grant to Bosnia and Herzegovina a system of local or administra-

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 1 (1877), p. 295.

tive autonomy, by which is to be understood a system of local institutions which shall give the population some control over their own local affairs and guarantees against the exercise of arbitrary authority. There is to be no question of a tributary state.

Guarantees of a similar kind to be also provided against mal-administration in Bulgaria.

Such was the outline of reforms which the Government left Lord Salisbury, after consultation with the other Powers, to fill up. It was not a violent or sweeping programme certainly ; but the Government seemed determined that it should be at least enforced. The Porte tried to ward off the intervention by the promise of Midhat's vaunted Constitution. But the Government gave Lord Salisbury distinctly to understand that he was not to be diverted from his object by any *ruse* of that sort. The following extracts are from the paper of 'Instructions' which he carried with him to the Conference. After enumerating the objections of the Porte, the 'Instructions' proceed :—

Her Majesty's Government have been unable to agree in this view of the matter. They have replied that the mere announcement of reforms by the Porte cannot be accepted as sufficient, and that even if Her Majesty's Government would be disposed to accept such an announcement no other Power would do so. . . .

The immediate necessity of the situation is to restore tranquillity to the disturbed Provinces. The course of events has made it obvious that this can now only be done by concert with the Powers ; and it is in vain for the Porte to expect that the Powers will be satisfied with the mere general assurances which have already been so often given, and have proved to be so imperfectly executed. . . . No doubt the Conference will give due weight to the reforms already promulgated, which will properly form an important element for consideration. But pacification cannot be attained by proclamations, and the Powers have a right to demand, in the interest of the peace of Europe, that they shall examine for themselves the measures required for the reform of the administration of the disturbed Provinces, and that adequate security shall be provided for carrying those measures into operation.

Her Majesty's Government have thought it desirable to refer to these objections advanced by the Porte, as they will probably be again put forward at the Conference or on your Excellency's arrival at Constantinople, and it is therefore right that you should be in a position to state positively that they cannot be entertained. . . .

The cruelty with which the attempted rising in the Balkans was suppressed has aroused the indignation of the civilised world, and made it equally imperative that the recurrence of such outrages should be adequately guarded against. . . .

The whole history of the Ottoman Empire since it was admitted into the European concert, under the engagements of the Treaty of Paris, has proved that the

Porte is unable to guarantee the execution of reforms in the Provinces by Turkish officials, who accept them with reluctance and neglect them with impunity.

The despatch which contains these admirable instructions is signed by Lord Derby; but it embodies the deliberations of the Cabinet, and in some of the paragraphs there are a vigour of style and an epigrammatic neatness of phrase which betray a more practised pen than Lord Derby's. The do-nothing policy is gone, and individual members of the Government protest that they intend to exact from the Porte a sufficient security against Turkish misrule. In a speech at Manchester on October 26, 1876, Mr. Cross expressed his own and quoted Lord Carnarvon's approval of the autumn agitation. 'All persons had taken part in the expression of horror and disgust at what had occurred, high and low, Liberal and Conservative.' The despatch in which Lord Derby denounced the Bulgarian Atrocities, and demanded condign punishment for the authors of them, 'was not a mere empty despatch for insertion in a Blue Book, but it was one which was to be followed out.'<sup>1</sup> Mr.

<sup>1</sup> Brave words ! But how have they been fulfilled ? The Porte laughed Lord Derby's despatch to scorn. Not one of



Cross quoted the case of the Lebanon in 1860-1 and declared that 'the cases of Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria should be dealt with in a similar manner,' that is, by military coercion.

Some weeks later Mr. Cross returned to the subject and declared as follows<sup>1</sup> :—

The Great Powers have a right to examine for themselves what provision would be sufficient to secure the good administration of these Provinces, and to see that adequate provision is made that all these measures shall be carried into effect. With all due respect to Turkey, I would say that of course the time has come when all what I may call the 'waste paper currency' of the Turkish promises shall be paid in sterling coin.

Sir Stafford Northcote, speaking at Bristol on November 13, 1876, said :—

I believe it to be impossible really to secure the peace of Europe unless we take steps also for the improved administration of the Provinces of Turkey. As long as you leave that sore open—as long as you do nothing to heal what is at the bottom of the cause of the authors of the massacres has been punished, and Lord Derby, at Mr. Layard's request on behalf of the Sultan, gave his passive sanction to the employment of Chefket Pasha, the chief of the criminals, in a high command in Bulgaria, where he repeated, as I have been assured by one of the Stafford House doctors who was an eye-witness, some of his most brutal crimes.—*Turkey*, No. 1 (1878), pp. 53-4.

<sup>1</sup> *Speech at Birmingham*, No. 20, 1876.

these disturbances, any peace you may promote for the moment will be but a hollow peace, and be but as a patchwork—a piece of sticking-plaster put over a wound when there is festering matter still left below.

Here then we have the Government at last in avowed harmony with the nation and with the rest of Europe. 'Pacification cannot be attained by proclamations.' The 'sticking-plaster' policy is abandoned. 'The waste-paper currency of the Turkish promises shall be paid in sterling coin.' The Conservative press applauded, and the Liberal press joined in the chorus. 'The Foreign Secretary,' said the *Times* of October 27, 1876, in an article on Mr. Cross' speech, 'has turned his back upon the course he formerly adopted, and we hope that the new departure of his policy [which was, in fact, a return to the traditional policy of the country] will be rewarded with a success which will unite the whole nation in gratitude to him.'

The Russian Government cordially and gratefully responded to this new attitude of the British Cabinet. In replying to Lord Derby's invitation to the Conference of Constantinople, Prince Gortchakoff, after expressing his agreement generally with the bases of negotiations laid down,

took exception to the formal recognition of the independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire. The following extract will sufficiently indicate the Imperial Chancellor's point of view and line of argument:—

If the Great Powers wish to accomplish a real work, and not expose themselves to the periodical and aggravated return of this dangerous crisis, it is impossible that they should persevere in the system which permits the germs of it to exist and develop with the inflexible logic of facts. It is necessary to escape from this vicious circle and to recognise that the independence and integrity of Turkey must be subordinated to the guarantees demanded by humanity, the sentiments of Christian Europe, and the general peace. The Porte has been the first to infringe the engagement which she contracted by the Treaty of 1856 with regard to her Christian subjects. It is the right and duty of Europe to dictate to her the conditions on which alone it can on its part consent to the maintenance of the political *status quo* created by that treaty; and since the Porte is incapable of fulfilling them, it is the right and duty of Europe to substitute itself for her to the extent necessary to ensure their execution. Russia can, less than every other Power, consent to renew the experiences of palliatives, of half-measures, of illusory programmes, which have led to the results which are under the eyes of all, and which react on her tranquillity and internal prosperity; but, if she is more directly, more sensibly interested in putting an end to it by real

and adequately guaranteed improvements, she none the less considers this question one of general interest, calling for the concord of all the Powers with a view to its pacific solution. With reference to the personal views which she brings into the pursuit of this object, they are free from all exclusive *arrière-pensées*; the most positive assurances in this respect have many times been given by the Imperial Cabinet.<sup>1</sup>

The difference between the two Cabinets, however, was merely a difference of form. For although Lord Derby acknowledged the independence of Turkey in words, he was rudely invading it in fact. What should we think of a lip acknowledgment of the independence of England by a Foreign Minister who should at the same time summon a Conference to meet in London for the avowed purpose of drawing up a constitution for Ireland; bidding his plenipotentiary meanwhile to 'state positively' to our Government that any proposed legislative measures of its own 'cannot be entertained'? I think we should all agree that an acknowledgment of our independence thus qualified would look remarkably like the addition of insult to injury, and we should prefer the downright, because the more honest, language of Prince Gortchakoff.

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 1 (1877), p. 719.

Let us now consider the circumstances under which the Conference met at Constantinople. On November 10, 1876, the Emperor of Russia delivered a speech at Moscow in which he made the following declaration :—

I desire above all things that the Powers should arrive at a common agreement ; but should I be disappointed in that hope, and see that we cannot obtain such guarantees as we have a right to demand of the Porte, I am firmly determined to act alone ; and I am certain that in that case the whole of Russia will respond to my appeal if I should judge it necessary, and the honour of the country require it.<sup>1</sup>

On November 13 the Czar ordered the mobilisation of a portion of the Russian army, the reasons for which are explained in the following circular despatch from Prince Gortchakoff :—

Tsarskoe Sélo, November  $\frac{1}{13}$ , 1876.

The sad events which have deluged with blood the Balkan Peninsula have deeply agitated Europe.

The Cabinets have consulted together, and have recognised the necessity, for the honour of humanity, and for the sake of general peace, of putting an end to this state of things.

They have put a stop to bloodshed by imposing an

<sup>1</sup> *Nouvelle Étude sur la Question d'Orient.* Par G. Robin-Jacquemyns, p. 26.



armistice on both parties, and have agreed to fix the basis on which peace is to be established, so as to give the Christian population serious guarantees against the incorrigible abuses of the Turkish Administration, as well as against the unbridled arbitrary proceedings of the Ottoman functionaries, and to reassure Europe against the periodical return of a crisis attended with so much bloodshed.

The Imperial Cabinet, finding itself in presence of a question where political interests should make way before the more universal interests of humanity and European peace, has done its utmost to bring about an agreement amongst the Great Powers.

For itself, it will neglect no effort in order that this agreement may bring about a practical and substantial result, and one which will satisfy the exigencies of public opinion and of general peace.

But while diplomacy has been deliberating for a whole year with a view to reduce to practice the combined wishes of Europe, the Porte has had time to summon from the recesses of Asia and Africa the ban and *arrière-ban* of the least disciplined forces of Islamism, to arouse Mussulman fanaticism, and to crush under the weight of its numbers the Christian populations who are struggling for their very existence. The perpetrators of the horrible massacres which have so shocked Europe remain unpunished, and at this very moment their example tends to propagate and perpetuate throughout the whole of the Ottoman Empire, and in full view of indignant Europe, similar acts of violence and barbarism.

Under these circumstances, His Majesty the Em-



peror has deemed it necessary to mobilise a portion of his army, though he is firmly resolved, for his part, to seek after and to endeavour to obtain by all the means in his power the purposes laid down by agreement amongst the Great Powers.

His Imperial Majesty does not wish for war, and will do his utmost to avoid it ; but he is determined not to halt before the principles which have been recognised by the whole of Europe as just, humane, and necessary, and which public opinion in Russia has taken up with the greatest energy, have been fully carried out, and secured by efficient guarantees.

You are authorised to read this despatch to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and to give him a copy of it.

I have, &c.

(Signed)

GORTCHAKOW.

On the 5th of the following December Prince Bismarck made a speech in the Reichstag. After quoting the declaration of the Czar, and denouncing the Bulgarian massacres as 'revolting to the conscience of the whole of Europe,' he said :—

Should the Conference not lead to any result, and should Russia determine to obtain by force of arms what she has failed to obtain by pacific means, we shall put no veto on her action, since the objects she pursues are also our own, and we have no reason to believe that she will pass the limits of those objects. No one shall succeed in disturbing our friendly relations with Russia, for the

alliance of the Three Emperors, formed some time ago, subsists to-day in its integrity.<sup>1</sup>

This was a distinct warning to Europe, three weeks before the Conference met, that Germany and Austria, failing any result from the Conference, would sanction a declaration of war by Russia.

The Foreign Minister of France, the Duc Decazes, pledged France, in the event of war against Turkey, to a policy of 'absolute neutrality, guaranteed by the most absolute non-intervention.'<sup>2</sup>

Signor Depretis, the Prime Minister of Italy, took occasion, in a speech to his constituents a short time before the Conference, to reprobate 'an excessive prudence' which should sacrifice 'the grand principles of civilisation and humanity to the traditions of diplomacy and the cold calculations of political interests.'

After the Conference had met, Lord Beaconsfield told Odian Effendi, a special agent of the Turkish Government in London, 'that it was impossible to suppose that in a contest with Russia the latter Power should not in the end come off

<sup>1</sup> *Nouvelle Etude sur la Question d'Orient*, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> *Turkey*, No. 25 (1877), p. 138.

victorious. The struggle might last for more than one campaign, but the ultimate result could scarcely be doubtful.'<sup>1</sup>

The Governments of the Great Powers, therefore, sent their representatives to the Conference with one fact plain and distinct in their minds. If pacific counsels did not prevail with the Porte, coercion was to follow—if not by united Europe, certainly by the sword of Russia. In the latter case they engaged to let Russia deal in her own way with the Porte, which must, on its part, bear the entire responsibility of the consequences. This is plain from the extracts quoted above; but it is still more plain from the language of Her Majesty's Government and Special Plenipotentiary. And first, as to the language of the Government. Lord Salisbury's Instructions conclude with the following solemn warning:—

In authorising your Excellency to declare this determination on the part of Her Majesty's Government at the Conference, should occasion require it, they desire at the same time that it should be understood by the Porte that Great Britain is resolved not to sanction misgovernment and oppression: and that if the Porte by obstinacy or apathy opposes the efforts which are now making to place

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 2 (1877), p. 260.

the Ottoman Empire on a more secure basis, the responsibility of the consequences which may ensue will rest solely with the Sultan and his advisers.<sup>1</sup>

On December 5, 1876, Lord Salisbury arrived at Constantinople. Soon afterwards a Preliminary Conference was held of all the Signatories of the Treaty of Paris except Turkey, who was not allowed to take part. On the 19th Midhat Pasha was installed into the office of Grand Vizier in the room of Mehemet Rushdi Pasha. On the 23rd the first meeting of the full Conference took place, the Preliminary Conference having in the meantime agreed upon the reforms which the Six Powers deemed essential in the interests of humanity and the peace of Europe. The discussions went on till January 20. On January 21, the Conference held its last meeting. In the previous discussions the original terms of the Conference<sup>2</sup> were reduced bit by bit till the nadir of conces-

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 2 (1877), p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Which were, in fact, the terms of the English Government. In the Preliminary Conference Russia proposed a plan of her own. This being thought too sweeping by the Government of Her Majesty, Russia at once withdrew it, and invited the English Plenipotentiary to submit the English proposals. From that moment Lord Salisbury took the lead, and was supported by the Russian Plenipotentiary down to the 'irreducible minimum.'

sion was reached in the 'irreducible minimum.' Yet even this shadow of the original substance was scornfully rejected by the Porte. And then Lord Salisbury delivered the warning with which his Government had charged him. He reminded the Porte of the great benefits which had accrued to it under the Treaty of Paris,—a Treaty which the Six Powers had observed 'without reservation.' But the Sultan had, on his part, made 'promises of reform,' and 'the engagements of the Treaty were not and cannot be unilateral.' If the Sultan should now, at the eleventh hour, decline to 'listen to the counsels of the Six guaranteeing Powers,' and still refuse to fulfil the engagements undertaken by the Porte under the Treaty of Paris, 'the position of Turkey before Europe will have been completely changed, and will be extremely perilous. . . . We can foresee dangers near at hand which will threaten the very existence of Turkey, if she allows herself to be entirely isolated.' Lord Salisbury, therefore, proceeded to 'free Her Majesty's Government from all responsibility for what may happen;' and in accordance with Lord Derby's instructions 'formally' declared:—'The responsibility of the consequences will rest solely



on the Sultan and his advisers.' To increase the solemnity of the occasion, Lord Salisbury added :--  
'In communicating to your Excellencies [the Turkish Plenipotentiaries] the modified summary, I am, moreover, authorised by the Plenipotentiaries to declare that it is the final communication which will be made to you by us.'<sup>1</sup> But perhaps Lord Salisbury exceeded his instructions? So it was said, in organs which affected official inspiration. But in a despatch dated 'February 5, 1877,' not only is Lord Salisbury's general conduct at the Conference approved of, but the grave warning in which he throws the responsibility of war, with all its consequences, 'solely on the Sultan and his advisers' is specifically ratified by the Queen and her Government.<sup>2</sup>

Here, then, we see the Turkish Government solemnly arraigned before the Areopagus of united Europe, solemnly judged, solemnly condemned. And the mouth which pronounces the sentence is that of the Special Plenipotentiary of England.

The rashness of the Porte in thus defying Europe seems, at first sight, incomprehensible.

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 2 (1877), pp. 361-2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 378.



But there was a method in its rashness. It believed, in fact, that in the last resort British interests would compel England to come to the rescue. Had it any reasonable ground for such belief? Let us see.

We have seen that the instructions to Lord Salisbury and the declarations of some of the foremost members of the Government, plainly pointed to a policy of coercion. 'Great Britain is resolved not to sanction misgovernment or oppression, and if the Porte by obstinacy or apathy opposes the efforts which are now making to place the Ottoman Empire on a more secure basis, the responsibility of the consequences which may ensue will rest solely with the Sultan and his advisers.' This is the language of the Cabinet, and some of the leading Ministers took great pains to emphasize its stringency. 'The waste paper currency of the Turkish provinces,' said the Home Secretary, 'shall be paid in sterling coin.' The 'sticking-plaster' policy, the Chancellor of the Exchequer assured us, would be flung aside in favour of a radical cure which should probe and close the ulcerous sore. And even the Foreign Secretary permitted himself to say that the Go-

vernment would 'insist' on adequate securities for the execution of the suggested reforms.

But what happened? On the day before the Conference opened, Lord Derby wrote to tell Lord Salisbury 'that Her Majesty's Government had decided that England will not assent to, or assist in, coercive measures, military or naval, against the Porte.'<sup>1</sup> This most important piece of information was despatched from London on December 22, and would reach Lord Salisbury rather more than a week after the Conference opened. But on the 19th—that is, four days before the Conference opened—it was communicated by Lord Derby to the Turkish Ambassador in London. 'I had informed him,' says Lord Derby, 'that, although Her Majesty's Government did not themselves meditate or threaten the employment of active measures of coercion in the event of the proposals of the Conference being refused by the Porte, yet that Turkey must not look to England for assistance or protection if that refusal resulted in a war with other countries.'<sup>2</sup>

On December 24, the Turkish Ambassador

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 2 (1877), p. 56.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 182.

called on Lord Derby, and handed him the following telegram which he had received from Safvet Pasha, the Foreign Minister of the Porte, and one of the Plenipotentiaries at the Conference :—

I have read it to the Grand Vizier. His Highness received this communication with deep gratitude, and begs you to express to His Excellency Lord Derby his acknowledgments. You will explain to his Lordship, in the name of the Grand Vizier, that the Sublime Porte reckons more than ever on the kind support of the Government of Her Britannic Majesty, under the difficult circumstances we are passing through. The great wisdom and spirit of justice which distinguish the eminent Minister who directs with such loyalty the foreign relations of England form a sure guarantee for us, that he will gladly give us a new proof of his kindness and valued friendship.<sup>1</sup>

The question is, what had Safvet Pasha read to the Grand Vizier to excite such 'deep gratitude' and lively hope? It is impossible to doubt that it was Lord Derby's intimation that England 'would neither assent to nor assist in coercive measures, military or naval, against the Porte.' This was Lord Derby's own impression at the

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 2 (1877), pp. 62, 182.

time, as he has frankly put on record.<sup>1</sup> Musurus Pasha suggested afterwards another explanation which, to speak plainly, is too childish to deserve any notice. Safvet's telegram, his Excellency thinks, was in answer to some complimentary expressions about Midhat Pasha, which Lord Derby had used on the occasion of his telling Musurus that England would not sanction a coercive policy. These 'unofficial' compliments Musurus had taken the trouble to telegraph to the Porte, but not the intimation about coercion! I have too good an opinion of Musurus Pasha's acuteness and sense of duty to trust the accuracy of his memory in this particular.

But the important point, after all, is that Lord Derby informed the Turkish Ambassador in London, two days before the Conference met, and two weeks before he informed Lord Salisbury, that Turkey had nothing to fear from England if she chose to reject the proposals of the Conference. So nervous, indeed, was Lord Derby lest Lord Salisbury should put too much force into his arguments, that he wrote to him again on January

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 2 (1877), p. 182.

13: 'But having reference to the Conference breaking up without result, it will be necessary to avoid all appearance of menace, and to hold no language that can be construed as pledging Her Majesty's Government to enforce those proposals at a later date.'<sup>1</sup> He had previously told the French Ambassador that he need not look for any support from the English Cabinet 'in measures of coercion against Turkey ;'<sup>2</sup> and he steadily refused to let Lord Salisbury sanction the presentation of any identic Note or Protocol to the Porte on the part of the Plenipotentiaries.<sup>3</sup> The more attenuated, too, the programme of the Conference became, the more pleased was Lord Derby.<sup>4</sup> In truth, Midhat Pasha made no secret of his belief that Lord Salisbury did not truly represent the policy of Her Majesty's Government. It is Lord Salisbury himself who reports that 'the Grand Vizier believed he could "count upon the assistance of Lord Derby and Lord Beaconsfield."' <sup>5</sup>

The Grand Vizier had excellent reasons for his belief. The 'Instructions' which the Government

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 2, p. 261.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 136.

<sup>3</sup> *Turkey*, pp. 21, 54, 183, 281.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 183.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 183.

gave to Lord Salisbury for his guidance in the Conference are excellent. They convey a warning and a menace to Turkey. But they are private. Neither Turks nor Englishmen knew anything about them till after the Conference. Lord Beaconsfield's Guildhall speech, on the other hand, was addressed to Europe, and was understood to indicate the policy of the Government.

And what was that policy? It was a scarcely veiled threat against Russia, with an implied promise of assistance to Turkey if Russia should assail her. That was the interpretation put upon the speech by those organs in the press which had close relations with the Premier and Foreign Secretary. Its mischievous effect was at once courteously pointed out by Prince Gortchakoff. 'On visiting Prince Gortchakoff this morning,' says Lord A. Loftus, 'I found his Highness rather disturbed in mind by the speech of the Earl of Beaconsfield at the Lord Mayor's banquet, which his Highness feared would have a bad effect at Constantinople, and would encourage the Porte in a policy of resistance to the counsels of Europe.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 1 (1877), p. 707.



How this kind of 'encouragement' affected the result of the Conference was very clearly explained by Lord Salisbury in his able and instructive speech in the House of Lords on February 20, 1877. I give his own words:—<sup>1</sup>

It is true that we went into the Conference, first of all, to restore peace between Turkey and Servia, and then to obtain a government for the Turkish Provinces ; but undoubtedly we also went to stop a great and menacing danger, namely, the prospect of a war between Russia and the Porte. This, then, being the evil which we came to avert, it naturally was in pointing out that evil that our moral influence on the Porte rested. We said to Turkey, ' Unless you do this or that, this terrible danger, which may well involve the loss of your Empire, is ready to fall upon you. We hope that our influence and advice may be able to avert it—indeed, we came here for that purpose. But we warn you that we shall accept no responsibility for the future if you treat our advice with disdain.' Undoubtedly it was in this sense true that the fear of the result of a rupture of the Congress—the fear of a breach with Russia—was the motive force of the Conference. Russia was the motive power of the Conference.

And Russia was ' the motive power of the Conference,' because she had an army mobilised on the frontier. The edge of this danger, however,

<sup>1</sup> *Times* report, February 21.

was blunted by two facts, as Lord Salisbury proceeds to explain. In the first place, the Turks believed that the interests of the other Powers would compel them to intervene between Russia and the destruction of the Turkish Empire. This was a belief, let me add, which was carefully fostered by the supporters of the Government in Parliament and in the press. It was also fostered by our Ambassador at Constantinople. Nay, more; Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Derby both used language which could bear no other meaning than that England, though she might not prevent Russia from declaring war, was bound, both in her own interest and also in defence of the Treaty of Paris, to step in and arrest the sword of Russia as soon as the independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire were put in jeopardy.

The second cause which, according to Lord Salisbury, destroyed the motive power of the Conference was the false reports of the condition of the Russian army which the pro-Turkish press of London propagated:—

To myself certainly it appears that one of the causes which led the Turks to this unfortunate resolution was the belief which was so sedulously fostered, I know not

by whom, but by irresponsible advisers, that the power of Russia was broken, that the armies of Russia were suffering from disease, that the mobilisation had failed, and that, consequently, the fear of war was over.

It is Lord Salisbury's opinion, therefore, that the Turkish Government would have accepted the terms of the Conference if they had only believed that Russia would declare war, that her army was efficient, and that they would be left absolutely alone in the agony of a mortal combat. Nobody who has taken the trouble to master the facts in the light of Turkish law and Turkish history will doubt that Lord Salisbury was perfectly right. It is laid down in the 'Multeka,' which is to the Turk what the decrees of Trent or of the Vatican are to an Ultramontane, that the Commander of the Faithful cannot make war, even in self-defence, without a Fetva (dogmatic sanction) from the Grand Mufti. And the Grand Mufti does not grant his Fetva till he is assured that the resources of the Sultan are such as to afford a reasonable prospect of success. 'The Fetva is now so indispensable a preliminary to any political act,' says Eton, 'that the Sultan who should dare to omit it would be declared an infidel by a Fetva issued by

the Mufti himself; and such a proceeding would be sufficient to excite against him both the populace and soldiery, and to precipitate him at once from his throne.'<sup>1</sup>

In the war just ended the Sultan could not have moved a battalion without the Fetva of the Sheik-ul-Islam; and that Fetva was only given on condition that the Sultan 'is assured that his State possesses the force necessary to resist the enemy, and that the war may possibly have a result favourable for his country.'<sup>2</sup> Can any one in his senses suppose that the Sultan would have demanded, or the Sheik-ul-Islam granted a Fetva to fight the armies and navies of United Europe? The policy of coercion, I repeat, was the policy of peace, of true statesmanship, and of real kindness to the Turks.

<sup>1</sup> *Survey of the Turkish Empire*, by W. E. Eton, Esq., edition of 1809, p. 22. One of the very best books ever written on Turkey, and by no means out of date now. The author spent twenty years in different parts of Russia and Turkey. He displays a thorough knowledge of both countries.

<sup>2</sup> *Turkey*, No. 26 (1877), p. 7.

## CHAPTER VII.

## AFTER THE CONFERENCE.

IN what position did the failure of the Conference leave Russia and the other Powers in respect to Turkey? In diplomatic phrase the Six Powers were called 'Mediating Powers.' Five of them regarded themselves as mediators between the Porte and its Christian subjects. The English Government took a different view. The agitation having done its work by the conversion of the Government to its policy, the country returned to its normal calm. It was satisfied with the declarations of the Government and with Lord Salisbury's mission, and waited in patience and hope for the deliberations of the Conference. Whether the Government mistook this lull in the public feeling for a sign of reaction, I know not; but a change in the policy of the Government itself is traceable from the opening of the Conference—a change

back into the old tracks of the Aylesbury speech. Lord Salisbury is pressed to yield, one by one, the guarantees on which Lord Derby had told him that he was to 'insist.' And when the other Powers withdrew their ordinary ambassadors from the Porte as a mark of their displeasure, the English Government was careful to let the Porte know that the withdrawal of Sir Henry Elliot had no such significance.<sup>1</sup>

From this retrograde change in the policy of the Government there followed naturally a corresponding view as to the office of the respective Plenipotentiaries at the Conference. The other Powers were mediating between the Porte and its insurgent subjects. The English Government, on the contrary, viewed the matter as a quarrel between Russia and Turkey, and the Conference as

<sup>1</sup> In a despatch to Lord Odo Russell, dated October 16, 1876, Lord Derby says : ' The object of the withdrawal of the Ambassador would have been to show displeasure on the part of England.'—(*Turkey*, No. 1 (1877), p. 482.) When the Conference failed, this 'show of displeasure' was watered down to an order that 'Sir Henry Elliot should come to England to report upon the situation.'—(*Turkey*, No. 2 (1877), p. 57.) Sir H. Elliot, moreover, was careful not to depart for some considerable time after the other Ambassadors, and he took leave of the Porte in a highly complimentary and encouraging speech.



a Court of Arbitration between them. As this is a point of great importance, it is well to give the evidence.

In a despatch from Pera, dated January 22, 1877, Lord Salisbury says:—‘The principal object of my mission—the *conclusion of a peace between Russia and Turkey*—has not been attained.’<sup>1</sup>

Lord Beaconsfield confirmed this view of the matter in the House of Lords on February 20, 1877: ‘What was the position of my noble friend (Lord Salisbury) at Constantinople? Why, he was there as a mediator between Russia and Turkey.’

Let us then adopt the view of our own Government and regard the Conference as a Court of Arbitration between Russia and Turkey. The unanimous award of the ‘mediators,’ pronounced by Lord Salisbury, was that the Turkish Government was entirely in the wrong, and that ‘the responsibility of the consequences’—namely, a declaration of war by Russia—‘will rest solely on the Sultan and his advisers.’<sup>2</sup>

Here we have the precise case provided for by

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 2 (1877), p. 377.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 362.

the Eighth Clause of the Treaty of Paris and by the Declaration annexed to the Treaty of 1871.

Let me quote. The former says :—

If there should arise between the Sublime Porte and one or more of the other signing Powers any misunderstanding which might endanger the maintenance of their relations, the Sublime Porte, and each of such powers, before having recourse to the use of force, shall afford the other Contracting Parties the opportunity of preventing such an extremity by means of this mediation.

The Declaration of 1871 says :—

The Plenipotentiaries of North Germany, of Austria-Hungary, of Great Britain, of Russia, and of Turkey, assembled to-day in Conference, recognise that it is an essential principle of the law of Nations that no Power can liberate itself from the engagements of a Treaty, nor modify the stipulations thereof, unless with the consent of the Contracting Powers, by means of an amicable arrangement.

Now I assert, on the evidence before the reader, that no Power was ever more distinctly released from a treaty engagement, 'by means of an amicable arrangement,' than Russia was by the verdict of the 'Mediating Powers' at the Conference of Constantinople. Look at the plain facts.

Two days before the Conference met, the

French Ambassador in London called on Lord Derby to inquire whether England would join in a policy of coercion, adding that 'much would depend on the attitude assumed by England.' Lord Derby replied that Her Majesty's Government would not be prepared *themselves* to employ measures of active coercion in order to extort the consent of Turkey to the proposals which had been drawn up at Constantinople ; while, on the other hand, they would not hold out to the Porte any hope of assistance or protection in the event of war ensuing on the refusal to entertain these proposals.' <sup>1</sup>

Lord Derby held similar language to the German Government. Five days after the Conference met he wrote to Lord Odo Russell as follows :—

It was stated by your Excellency in your telegram of yesterday that Count Münster had reported that I told him that Her Majesty's Government could not exercise any pressure on the Porte to compel the acceptance of the proposals to be made by the representatives of the Six Powers, and that it had consequently been intimated to you by the Emperor that he feared that if pressure were not equally exercised by all the Powers, the Porte

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 2 (1877), p. 57.

might feel encouraged to resist, and war with Russia would ensue, much to the regret of His Imperial Majesty. . . . Though Her Majesty's Government would not be prepared *themselves* to employ measures of coercion to extort consent, they would not hold out to the Porte any hope of assistance or protection in the event of war ensuing on the refusal to entertain the proposals. My language to Count Schouvaloff was no less explicit, and on all other occasions I have spoken to the same effect.<sup>1</sup>

In harmony with this policy, Lord Salisbury was instructed by his Government to declare that 'if the Porte by obstinacy or apathy opposes the efforts which are now making to place the Ottoman Empire on a more secure basis, the responsibility of the consequences which may ensue will rest entirely with the Sultan and his advisers.'<sup>2</sup>

On the failure of the Conference Lord Salisbury made this declaration in the name of his own Government and of the other 'Mediating Powers,'<sup>3</sup> and then wrote to the Cabinet in London: 'The principal object of my mission—the conclusion of a peace between Russia and Turkey—has failed.'<sup>4</sup>

There never was a clearer case in the annals of

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 2 (1877), p. 69.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 362.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 377.

diplomacy. The Five Powers—and Russia herself most of all—wished to prevent war between Russia and Turkey by adopting a policy of bloodless coercion towards the latter. I say ‘bloodless coercion,’ because the idea of Turkey resisting united Europe is an absurdity. The Turks would certainly not have resisted under such circumstances; and if they did, what would it have mattered? Just as much as the resistance of a tipsy ruffian in the grasp of six powerful policemen. The English Government stood aloof from this pacific policy, and preferred to let Russia and Turkey fight it out. But in announcing that decision the Government announced at the same time that the guilt of the war ‘rests solely on the Sultan and his advisers;’ in other words, that Russia was free to declare war against Turkey, the Treaties of Paris and the Declaration of 1871 notwithstanding.

But Russia, in spite of the liberty thus accorded to her by the award of her co-signatories to the Treaty of Paris, was still anxious to avoid the *ultima ratio* of battle. Prince Gortchakoff accordingly sent the following despatch to the Cabinets of Europe:—

Circular.

St. Petersburg, January 19, 1877.

M. l'Ambassadeur,—The refusal opposed by the Porte to the wishes of Europe involves the Eastern crisis in a new phase. The Imperial Cabinet has from the outset considered this question as an European one, which should not and cannot be solved but by the unanimous agreement of the Great Powers. As a matter of fact all exclusive and personal considerations were disclaimed by all the Cabinets, and the difficulty resolved itself into inducing the Government of Turkey to govern the Christian subjects of the Sultan in a just and humane manner, so as not to expose Europe to permanent crises which are revolting to its conscience, and endanger its tranquillity.

It was, therefore, a question of common unanimity and interest. The Imperial Cabinet has accordingly endeavoured to bring about an European concert to appease this crisis and prevent its return. It came to an agreement with the Austro-Hungarian Government, as the one most immediately interested, in order to submit to the European Cabinets propositions which might serve as a basis for a general understanding and common action.

These propositions, set forth in Count Andrassy's despatch of the  $\frac{18}{30}$ th December, 1875, had obtained the adhesion of all the Great Powers, and also of the Porte. The want of executive sanction having, however, rendered this agreement abortive, the Cabinets were placed, by the Berlin Memorandum, in a position to pronounce on the principle of an eventual concert, having in view more effectual measures for realizing their mutual aim.



The agreement not having proved unanimous, and diplomatic action being thus interrupted, the Cabinets recommenced negotiations in consequence of the aggravation of the crisis by the massacres in Bulgaria, the revolution in Constantinople, and the war with Servia and Montenegro.

On the initiative of the English Government they agreed upon a basis and guarantees of pacification to be discussed at a Conference to be held at Constantinople. This Conference arrived during its preliminary meetings at a complete understanding both as to the conditions of peace and as to the reforms to be introduced. The result was communicated to the Porte as the fixed and unanimous wish of Europe, and met with an obstinate refusal.

Thus after more than a year of diplomatic efforts attesting the importance attached by the Great Powers to the pacification of the East, the right which they have, in view of the common welfare, to assure that pacification, and their firm determination to bring it about, the Cabinets again find themselves in the same position as at the commencement of this crisis, which has been moreover aggravated by bloodshed, heated passions, accumulated ruin, and the prospect of an indefinite prolongation of the deplorable state of things which hangs over Europe, and justly preoccupies the attention of both peoples and Governments.

The Porte makes light of her former engagements, of her duty as a member of the European system, and of the unanimous wishes of the Great Powers. Far from having advanced one step towards a satisfactory solution,

the Eastern question had become aggravated, and is at the present moment a standing menace to the peace of Europe, the sentiments of humanity, and the conscience of Christian nations.

Under these circumstances, before determining on the steps which it may be proper to take, His Majesty the Emperor is desirous of knowing the limits within which the Cabinets with whom we have till now endeavoured, and still desire so far as may be possible to proceed in common, are willing to act.

The object held in view by the Great Powers was clearly defined by the proceedings of the Conference.

The refusal of the Turkish Government threatens both the dignity and the tranquillity of Europe.

It is necessary for us to know what the Cabinets, with whom we have hitherto acted in common, propose to do with a view of meeting this refusal, and insuring the execution of their wishes.

You are requested to seek information in this respect, after reading and leaving a copy of the present despatch to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Accept, &c.

(Signed) GORTCHAKOW.

Observe the care with which the Russian Chancellor avoids every allusion calculated to wound English susceptibilities. It was England's dog-in-the-manger policy that had thwarted the humane and pacific efforts of European diplomacy thus far. Yet not a whisper of reproach escapes from the

Russian Government. Even our defeat of the Berlin Memorandum is glided over by a euphemism—‘the agreement not having proved unanimous.’

Let us now turn to England and see how the failure of the Conference affected public opinion. Lord Derby returned, as we shall presently see, to his optimist views, and thought war very improbable. The general opinion, however, was, that war was inevitable. Russia, it was believed, could not, without dishonour, go back from her pledges; and it was the adversaries and revilers of Russia who pressed this point with most persistency. Let one example suffice. The *Pall Mall Gazette* of January 22, 1877, after quoting the Emperor's pledge at Moscow to act independently if the other Powers shrank from enforcing the proposals of the Conference, proceeds:

No words could have more distinctly pledged the Czar to act at this moment and under the circumstances that have actually arisen. If his language had been chosen with a view to exclude the plea that Russia need not take the responsibility of forcing results where all Europe had failed to persuade, it could not have been more explicit or more emphatic; and we are not inclined to make light of that circumstance. Besides the Czar must take action—of some sort. If he does not push his

armies forward—now or in a few weeks' time—he must call them home ; and, obvious as are the risks of the one operation, it is as credible as the other. If we call up a vision of those armies ordered back again, and going back, we look upon a spectacle in which we can scarcely believe. It is not only a spectacle of humiliation, but even of ludicrous humiliation, and that on a very wide scale. We are not inclined to be sympathetic and soft-hearted in presence of a Russian defeat, but the difficulties of this alternative are so great that we do sincerely wish that Russia, for her own sake, had not intrigued herself into her present deplorable position. She has no longer even a choice of war or humiliation. The former alternative can be forced upon her at any moment. Should it seem good to Turkey that the conflict which she believes to be inevitable, and which in the judgment of all Europe can only be deferred for a time, had better commence at once, Russia will have to fight whether it pleases her or no. And there happen to be many sound reasons for thinking that war would be far more advantageous for Turkey now than it is likely to be a year or two hence. Indeed, a survey of the condition of Europe at this moment, of the policies and relations of the various Powers, leads straight to that conclusion : and the Turks have shown so much audacity up to this point that there is no difficulty in supposing them inclined to adopt it.

This is one of the mildest specimens of the articles published at that time by the philo-Turk press of London—articles written for no other

purpose that I can imagine than that of goading Russia into a war which would be 'advantageous for Turkey.' The coarsest abuse was poured out upon a nation of 80,000,000, from the Emperor to the Mudjik. And the same counsellors, whose advice has proved so disastrous to the Turks, are now doing their utmost to prove that an Anglo-Russian war would be 'advantageous' for England.

But let us turn from what Lord Salisbury called mildly the ill-advised 'utterances' of reckless newspapers to the responsible declarations of Her Majesty's Government. Lord Derby made a speech in the House of Lords on February 8, 1877, from which I cull a few extracts. The Conference, he maintained, was not a failure. It had done several good things. For example, 'the Conference had done much in various ways to prepare and smooth the way for peace, if peace is desired. In the first place, it has gained time. . . . The state of opinion which exists in Russia is now, so far as we can ascertain, not that which existed a few months ago. Then report told us of a general excitement, of a general ardour and enthusiasm for a new crusade. Now the reaction has come,



and we are told that among influential persons in Russia there is a strong disposition to consider calmly and coolly the chances and risks of war, and not rush into them hastily.' Another good fruit of the Conference was that the original programme, 'which there was no hope of the Porte accepting, was cut down in material points [which there was just as little hope of the Porte accepting by the methods of Lord Derby's diplomacy]. The question is now between that which can be peaceably obtained from the Porte and that which has been ineffectually asked from the Porte, and Europe will have to consider whether the difference between the two is so wide as to give any reasonable cause for war. . . . Russia is only one of Six Powers which have taken a common part in the discussions of the Conference. The Emperor may, therefore, perfectly well say to his subjects that he sees no reason why he, single-handed, should endeavour to resent a slight which was equally sustained by all Europe, or to enforce views which were equally those of every other European Power.'

I have every wish to write respectfully of Lord Derby. His final resignation of office is proof, if proof were needed, of his sincerity and patriotism.



His name has till now been a tower of strength to the Ministry. His calm and pacific speeches have acted as a successful antidote to the bellicose rhetoric of Lord Beaconsfield. He has therefore been utilised till his wily chief, aided by Mr. Layard, could 'educate' the country into a warlike temper by a series of manœuvres which I refrain from characterising. Having served this useful purpose, Lord Derby's presence in the Cabinet became inconvenient, and he has accordingly been got rid of. It is a situation which disarms criticism. But I cannot proceed with my task without criticising Lord Derby's policy, and my difficulty is to describe it in language which shall be at once courteous yet just.

Now let the reader look back at the extracts from the 'Instructions' to Lord Salisbury (p. 160-3), and the extracts from the speeches of Mr. Cross and Sir Stafford Northcote (pp. 163, 164) and compare them with the passages which I have just quoted from Lord Derby's speech of Feb. 9, 1877. We are back again in the policy of 'the waste-paper currency of Turkish promises' and the 'sticking-plaster' remedies which the Home Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exchequer had assured us had been abandoned for ever. We believed them. And this

is our reward. 'It is in vain for the Porte,' said the Government in November, 'to expect the Powers will be satisfied with the mere general assurances which have already been so often given, and have proved to be so imperfectly executed.' In the following February we are told by the Government that it is not in vain at all. 'Pacification cannot be attained by proclamations,' said the Government in November. In February the same Government tells us that it can. 'It is therefore right,' said the Government in November, 'that you should be in a position to state positively that these objections advanced by the Porte cannot be entertained.' In November this consistent Government thinks it a matter of congratulation that the original programme of the Conference 'has been cut down in material points' in consequence of 'these objections advanced by the Porte,' which 'cannot be entertained.'

To the surprise of everybody, however, and to the disappointment of not a few, Russia made an enormous concession. In the Protocol of March 31, the Six Powers merely invited the Porte to carry out its own promised reforms in its own way, merely adding that they 'proposed to watch, by

means of their representatives at Constantinople and their local agents, the manner in which the promises of the Ottoman Government are carried into effect.' In presenting the draft of the Protocol to Lord Derby the Emperor of Russia made the following declaration through his Ambassador in London<sup>1</sup> :—

After the sacrifices which Russia had imposed upon herself, the stagnation of her industry and of her commerce, and the enormous expenditure incurred by the mobilisation of 500,000 men, she could not retire nor send back her troops without having obtained some tangible result as regards the improvement of the condition of the Christian populations of Turkey. The Emperor was sincerely desirous of peace, but not of peace at any price.

The London Protocol was Russia's ultimatum to the Porte before declaring a war of which 'the responsibility,' according to the judgment of Europe as pronounced by England, would 'rest solely on the Sultan and his advisers.' That this was the light in which Russia regarded the Protocol is plain from the declaration of the Emperor quoted above. Declarations of a similar kind were

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 8 (1877), p. 2.

made to the other Cabinets.<sup>1</sup> In order that the reader may judge for himself how singularly moderate the Russian ultimatum was, I append the text of the Protocol as finally amended by Lord Derby.<sup>2</sup>

The Powers who have undertaken in common the pacification of the East, and have with that view taken part in the Conference at Constantinople, recognise that the surest means of attaining the object which they have proposed to themselves is before all to maintain the agreement so happily established between them, and jointly to affirm afresh the common interest which they take in the improvement of the condition of the Christian populations of Turkey, and in the reforms to be introduced in Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria, which the Porte has accepted on condition of itself carrying them into execution. They take cognisance of the conclusion

<sup>1</sup> See *Documenti Diplomatici concernenti Il Protocollo di Londra*, pp. 5, 6, 13.

Sir A. Buchanan writes from Vienna on April 8, 1877 :— ‘ His Excellency [the Austrian Minister] informed me that a telegram had been sent to the Austrian Chargé d’Affaires, on the 6th inst., instructing him to state to the Porte that peace or war is now in its hands, and to recommend it urgently to accept the principle of the Protocol, as Europe will consider the Turkish Government responsible for the consequences which may be expected from its refusing to do so.’—*Turkey*, No. 25 (1877), p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> As usual, the English Government was the only Government that made any serious objection to the Protocol. Russia yielded, and accepted Lord Derby’s corrections.

of peace with Servia. As regards Montenegro, the Powers consider the rectification of the frontiers and the free navigation of the Boiana to be desirable in the interest of a solid and durable arrangement. The Powers consider the arrangements concluded, or to be concluded, between the Porte and the two Principalities, as a step accomplished towards the pacification which is the object of their common wishes. They invite the Porte to consolidate it by replacing its armies on a peace footing, excepting the number of troops indispensable for the maintenance of order, and by putting in hand with the least possible delay the reforms necessary for the tranquillity and well-being of the Provinces, the condition of which was discussed at the Conference. They recognise that the Porte has declared itself ready to realise an important portion of them. They take cognisance specially of the Circular of the Porte of February 13, 1876, and of the declarations made by the Ottoman Government during the Conference, and since through its representatives. In view of these good intentions on the part of the Porte, and of its evident interest to carry them immediately into effect, the Powers believe that they have grounds for hoping that the Porte will profit by the present lull to apply energetically such measures as will cause that effective improvement in the condition of the Christian populations which is unanimously called for as indispensable to the tranquillity of Europe, and that having once entered on this path, it will understand that it concerns its honour as well as its interests to persevere in it loyally and efficaciously. The Powers propose to watch carefully, by means of their representatives at



Constantinople and their local agents, the manner in which the promises of the Ottoman Government are carried into effect. If their hopes should once more be disappointed, and if the condition of the Christian subjects of the Sultan should not be improved in a manner to prevent the return of the complications which periodically disturb the peace of the East, they think it right to declare that such a state of affairs would be incompatible with their interests and those of Europe in general. In such case, they reserve to themselves to consider in common as to the means which they may deem best fitted to secure the well-being of the Christian populations, and the interests of the general peace.

Done at London, March 31, 1877.

(Signed)

MÜNSTER.

DERBY.

BEUST.

L. F. MENABREA.

L. D'HARCOURT.

SCHOUVALOFF.

One might have thought that here was a document harmless enough to enable the English Government to act for once in loyal concert with the pacific endeavours of the other Powers. But from the first day of negotiations for the pacification of Turkey till now some spirit of mischief has brooded over the counsels of the English Cabinet, and constrained it to act in discord with the other Powers. The natural result followed. The Turks were encouraged by the sullen and separate action



of England, and resisted the only measures which would have saved it from ruin. The London Protocol was no exception to this perverse and fatal policy. In spite of protests from other Powers,<sup>1</sup> the English Government appended a declaration to the Protocol which forced other Governments to do the same. So that when unanimity was most sorely needed, England again broke it. The inevitable result followed. The Porte rejected the Protocol because it regarded the declaration appended to it by Lord Derby as an encouragement from the English Government to do so. This is put beyond a doubt by a despatch from the Italian Chargé d'Affaires at Constantinople to his Government on April 5, 1877. In a conversation that day with Safvet Pasha, the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs, the latter said: 'I know that Italy has made a declaration in the sense of Lord Derby's, and we are encouraged in seeing that your Government associates itself with that of England in manifesting its sympathies for us.' 'I replied,' says Signor Galvagna, 'that the

<sup>1</sup> *Documenti Diplomatici concernenti Il Protocollo di Londra*, p. 15.

Sublime Porte did not need a new proof of the interest which Italy has always taken in the prosperity and integrity of the Ottoman Empire.' 'And it is for that reason,' replied Safvet, 'that we hope to see Italy proceeding always in company with England (*procedere sempre di conserva con l'Inghilterra*).' Signor Galvagna speedily undeceived him, and warned him in plain language that the safety of the Ottoman Empire depended on the Porte's conciliating the Powers generally, rather than on the hope of seeing them acting against each other.<sup>1</sup>

The history of the Protocol would not be complete without citing the evidence of Midhat Pasha. 'This document,'<sup>2</sup> he says, 'had in it, I think, nothing in any sense compromising the integrity and independence of the Empire. It would have been easy then to remove or attenuate any expressions in it which might offend our dignity. But it was rejected by the Government with an insolence and arrogance such as the greatest Power on earth should not have employed.'

<sup>1</sup> *Documenti Diplomatici concernenti Il Protocollo di Londra*, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> In a letter published in the *Morning Post* last January.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE WAR AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

AFTER the evidence supplied in the previous chapter, no one will dispute that it was worse than useless to trust any longer to 'the waste-paper currency of the Turkish promises.' The only alternatives that remained, since England defeated the pacific expedient of collective coercion, was the 'sticking-plaster' policy which Sir Stafford Northcote denounced, or the sword of Russia. The Emperor of Russia chose the latter, and on April 23 (new style), declared war against Turkey in a Manifesto<sup>1</sup> which I quote in refutation of the reiterated fiction that the Czar proclaimed a crusade :—

WE, Alexander II., by the Grace of God Emperor and Autocrat of all the Russias, &c.,

Make known :—

Our faithful and beloved subjects know the lively

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 25 (1877), p. 107.

interest which we have always devoted to the destinies of the oppressed Christian population of Turkey. Our desire to ameliorate and guarantee their condition has been shared by the whole of the Russian nation, which shows itself ready to-day to make fresh sacrifices to relieve the condition of the Christians in the Balkan Peninsula.

The life and property of our faithful subjects have always been dear to us. Our whole reign testifies to our constant anxiety to preserve to Russia the benefits of peace. This anxiety did not cease to animate us at the time of the sad events which came to pass in Herzegovina, Bosnia, and Bulgaria. We made it pre-eminently our object to attain the amelioration of the condition of the Christians in the East by means of peaceful negotiations and concerted action with the great European Powers, our allies and friends.

During two years we have made incessant efforts to induce the Porte to adopt such reforms as would protect the Christians of Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria from the arbitrary rule of the local authorities. The execution of these reforms followed, as a direct obligation, from the anterior engagements solemnly contracted by the Porte in the sight of all Europe. Our efforts, although supported by the joint diplomatic representations of the other Governments, have not attained the desired end. The Porte has remained immovable in its categorical refusal of every effectual guarantee for the security of its Christian subjects, and it rejected the demands of the Conference of Constantinople. Wishing to try all possible means of conciliation in order to persuade the Porte, we proposed to the other Cabinets to draw up a special

Protocol, comprising the most essential conditions of the Conference of Constantinople, and to invite the Turkish Government to join this international action, which traces the extreme limits of our peaceable demands. But our expectation was not realised. The Porte has not deferred to this unanimous wish of Christian Europe, and has not complied with the demands of the Protocol.

Having exhausted our peaceful efforts, we are obliged by the haughty obstinacy of the Porte to proceed to more determined action. The sentiment of equity and that of our own dignity render it imperative. Turkey, by its refusal, places us under the necessity of having recourse to arms. Deeply convinced of the justice of our cause, and relying in all humility upon the grace and assistance of the Most High, we make known to our faithful subjects that the moment foreseen by us when we pronounced these words, to which the whole of Russia answered with such unanimity, has actually arrived. We expressed our intention of acting independently, should we deem it necessary, and should the honour of Russia require it. To-day, in invoking the blessing of God upon our valiant armies, we give them the order to cross the frontier of Turkey.

Given at Kischeneff, the 12th day of the month of April of the year of grace 1877, the 23rd of our reign.

(Signed) ALEXANDER.

France, Italy, Austria, Germany received the Russian Declaration of War with tacit acquiescence. The English Government, faithful to its



policy of isolation—doing nothing itself, and preventing others from acting—greeted the Czar's declaration of war with an acrimonious despatch, dated May 1. The 'sticking-plaster' policy is now once more in the ascendant, and one is tempted to say that the previous promises of Her Majesty's Government are as much 'waste-paper currency' as those Turkish promises which the Home Secretary had assured the people of England, amidst the cheers of a Birmingham audience, 'shall be paid in sterling coin.'

Let me extract the cream of this singular document :—

While declaring that they cannot consider the Protocol as having any binding character on Turkey, the Turkish Government have again affirmed their intention of carrying into execution the reforms already promised. Her Majesty's Government cannot therefore admit, as is contended by Prince Gortchakow, that the answer of the Porte removed all hope of deference on its part to the wishes and advice of Europe, and all security for the application of the suggested reforms.

The reader will remember that Lord Salisbury, a competent authority, had declared in the House of Lords on February 20, 1877, that the mobilisation of the Russian army was 'the motive power of



the Conference.' Yet the despatch of May 1 declares that 'Her Majesty's Government have not concealed their feeling that the presence of large Russian forces on the frontiers of Turkey . . . constituted a material obstacle to internal pacification and reform.' The Russian declaration of war, moreover, 'is in contravention of the stipulation of the Treaty of Paris of March 30, 1856, by which Russia and the other Signatory Powers engaged, each on its own part, to respect the independence and the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire . . . In taking action against Turkey on his own part, and having recourse to arms without further consultation with his allies, the Emperor of Russia has separated himself from the European concert hitherto maintained, and has at the same time departed from the rule to which he himself had solemnly recorded his consent.'

In short, the British Government, in this despatch, throws the entire blame of the war on Russia, having, three months previously, declared in the hearing of Europe and by the mouth of England's Special Representative, that the 'responsibility' of the war 'will rest solely on the Sultan and his advisers;' having also agreed to regard the Con-

ference at Constantinople as the answer to the Eighth Clause of the Treaty of Paris and to the London Declaration of 1871. What will history say of this style of diplomacy, this playing fast and loose with solemn engagements? We hear much of the 'duplicity' of Russian diplomacy. Would that we could declare with a clear conscience that foreign nations are without excuse for retorting the accusation! 'Perfidious Albion' is not a phrase of Russian invention.

Is it possible to suggest any explanation of this extraordinary change in the policy of the Government? Yes; and in that explanation lies the danger of the present crisis. Between Lord Salisbury's warning to the Porte and the Russian declaration of war, Mr. Layard had been sent to Constantinople; and he immediately set himself to reverse the policy of the Government, as represented by Lord Salisbury. Lord Salisbury had warned the Porte, in the name not only of his own Government, but of the other guaranteeing Powers, that since the Treaty of Paris 'could not be unilateral,' the Porte, by refusing to fulfil its share of the engagements, had forfeited the rights which depended on such fulfilment. Its *status* under the

Treaty was 'completely changed.' Mr. Layard saw that it was all up with the Porte unless he could extricate it out of this dilemma, and he set at once about the work of extrication. By hook or by crook Russia must be put in the wrong in the public opinion of England. By hook or by crook Turkey must be put in the right, not by getting her to fulfil her promises, but by diplomatic legerdemain. Mr. Layard accordingly drew up a 'Memorandum' for the Turkish Government, showing how this could be done. It is published in Blue-book No. 25, p. 162, and is an instructive comment on England's 'neutrality.' According to this 'Memorandum,' the Porte was to appeal to the Eighth Article of the Treaty of Paris. 'Her answer to the Protocol,'—so runs the 'Memorandum'— 'whatever may have been its intention, has been universally considered as a defiance and provocation to Russia, who avails herself of this impression to lead Europe to believe that Turkey alone is responsible for the war which may ensue.' Why, it was not Russia, but the British Government which declared that 'Turkey alone is responsible for the war which may ensue.'

It is of the utmost importance to Turkey (continues

the Memorandum), that this impression should be removed, and the best mode of doing so is by showing that she is willing and ready to make peace, and to place herself in the hands of the Mediating Powers with that object. . . It must not be forgotten that the declarations made by the British Government as to the impossibility of coming to the aid of Turkey in case of a war with Russia remain in full force, and that public opinion in England would not support or approve any Government that was prepared to help Turkey. It is of vital importance to Turkey that she should seek to change or modify this opinion, and the best way to do so is to show that she is ready to make reasonable sacrifices in the interests of peace. . . If Turkey is anxious that the present state of things should cease, and that Russia should be compelled to declare war, a proposal for mediation on her part would be more likely than anything else to make Russia come to a decision, and to avoid loss of time. Russia would have either to accept mediation or to refuse. In the first case she would be placing herself under the control of the Powers, who might call upon her to disarm, and Turkey might either disarm of her own free will, relying upon the support of the Mediating Powers, either making a condition on the subject or not, as might appear most prudent, or she might propose an immediate simultaneous disarmament as the first condition of the mediation. *If Russia refused this condition, she would undoubtedly place herself in the wrong before public opinion.*

Turkey can lose nothing by appealing to the Eighth Article of the Treaty of Paris, which it is her right, o

rather her duty to do. If the appeal succeeds, so much the better ; if it does not, Turkey is precisely in the same position as regards her defensive and other measures, with the immense advantage of having given a proof to the world of her earnest desire for peace.

The British Ambassador, intriguing with the Turkish Government how to reverse the declared policy of his own country in order to put Russia 'in the wrong before public opinion,' is not an edifying spectacle. The Porte took Mr. Layard's advice, and in a circular despatch to the Powers appealed to the Eighth Clause of the Treaty of Paris, in order—I quote the words of Mr. Layard's advice—'that Russia should be compelled to declare war.'

Lord Derby fell into the trap thus cunningly laid for him, and backed up the appeal of the Porte to the Eighth Clause of the Treaty of Paris.<sup>1</sup> Here again the English Government stood quite alone ; the other Governments repelled the Turko-Layard conspiracy on the evident ground that the arbitration contemplated by the Eighth Clause of the Treaty of Paris had been already exhausted by the Conference of Constantinople and the Protocol

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 25 (1877), p. 93.



of London.<sup>1</sup> Russia sent a Circular despatch in this sense to the Powers, and the English Government alone took exception to it in the scolding despatch of May 1.

<sup>1</sup> 'The Duke (Decazes) told me this afternoon that Halil Pasha, the Turkish Ambassador, had communicated to him a despatch from the Porte appealing to the Eighth Article of the Treaty of Paris, and calling upon the Powers to mediate between Russia and Turkey.

'The Duke had, he said, observed to Halil Pasha that there were two branches of the question: there was, first, the difference between the Porte and all the Powers, produced by the rejection of the Protocol; and in the second place there was the special quarrel between Turkey and Russia. In order to put the other Powers into a position to mediate, the Porte must set herself right with them. *In short, the first step for the Porte to take was to signify its acceptance of the Protocol.* There would then remain the questions of a cessation of hostilities and of disarmament, and upon these questions mediation might perhaps be feasible.'—Lord Lyons to Lord Derby, *Turkey*, No. 25 (1877), p. 92. Cf. pp. 93, 104.



## CHAPTER IX.

‘THE CHARTER OF OUR POLICY’ AND THE  
TERMS OF PEACE.

IN his speech in the House of Lords, on January 26, 1877, Lord Beaconsfield said : ‘The charter of our policy with regard to the politics of Eastern Europe is the despatch of May.’ In that despatch Lord Derby laid down on behalf of Her Majesty’s Government four points, which specially affected British interests, and therefore vitally touched the conditions of our neutrality. These were Egypt, the Suez Canal, the Straits of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus, and Constantinople. Egypt and the Suez Canal must be kept outside the theatre of Russia’s operations ; no alteration must be made in the *status quo* of the Straits without the consent of England ; and ‘Her Majesty’s Government are not prepared to witness with indifference the passing into other hands than those of its present

possessors of a capital holding so peculiar and commanding a position' as Constantinople.<sup>1</sup> As to Egypt and the Suez Canal, an impartial neutrality would surely have laid on the Sultan the same embargo which it laid on the Czar. As a matter of fact, however, the Sultan was allowed to embrace Egypt and the Suez Canal within the area of his operations against Russia, while the Emperor of Russia was prevented, by the conditions of neutrality laid down by Lord Derby, from defending himself in that quarter. Nevertheless, the Russian Government overlooked this unfairness, and frankly accepted Lord Derby's somewhat one-sided conditions. In his reply to the despatch of May 6—'the charter of our policy'—Prince Gortchakoff promised to exclude Egypt and the Suez Canal from the field of warfare, and to submit whatever arrangement Russia might propose in regard to the Straits to the final decision of the Great Powers. As to Constantinople, while reserving the right to occupy it for military purposes, if necessary, Prince Gortchakoff declared that it could not be allowed to fall into the hands of any

<sup>1</sup> *Russia*, No. 2 (1877), p. 1.

of the European Powers, and that its future destiny; if the issue of the war should raise that question, must be decided by the common voice of Europe.<sup>1</sup>

Before the receipt of Prince Gortchakoff's despatch, however, Mr. Cross delivered the oft-quoted speech in which he appeared to deny to Russia the right of 'approaching' Constantinople, and still more of occupying it even temporarily. Russia had no official cognizance of the Home Secretary's speech, and was in no sense bound by it. But the Emperor of Russia and his Government were evidently most anxious to have a complete and friendly understanding with England. They determined accordingly that the ambiguity which Mr. Cross's language had cast over 'the charter of our policy' should be cleared up without delay. Count Schouvaloff was in Russia at the time, and immediately on his return to London

<sup>1</sup> *Russia*, No. 2 (1877), p. 3.—'As far as concerns Constantinople, without being able to prejudge the course or issue of the war, the Imperial Cabinet repeats that the acquisition of that capital is excluded from the views of His Majesty the Emperor. They recognise that, in any case, the future of Constantinople is a question of common interest, which cannot be settled otherwise than by a general understanding; and that if the possession of that city were to be put in question, it could not be allowed to belong to any of the European Powers.'

he made a clean breast of the Russian terms to Lord Derby. In the important Memorandum which contains what may be called 'the charter of Russian policy,' the Emperor repeats his promise about Egypt, the Suez Canal, and the Straits. But—

With regard to Constantinople, our assurances can only refer to taking possession of the town, or occupying it permanently. It would be singular and without precedent, if, at the outset of war, one of the belligerents undertook beforehand not to pursue its military operations up to the walls of the capital. It is not impossible that the obstinacy of the Turks, especially if they knew themselves to be guaranteed against such an eventuality, may prolong the war instead of bringing it to a speedy termination. When once the English ministry is fully assured that we shall under no circumstances remain at Constantinople, it will depend upon England and the other Powers to relieve us of the necessity of even approaching the town. It will be sufficient for them to use their influence with the Turks with a view to make peace possible before this extreme step is taken. . . . England appears to fear lest the spreading or consequences of the war should lead us to threaten Bassorah and the Persian Gulf. It is not at all to our interest to trouble England in her Indian possessions, or, consequently, in her communications with them.<sup>1</sup>

There are those, I am sorry to know, who pro-

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 15 (1878), p. 3.

claim aloud that the solemn assurances of the Emperor of Russia and of his Government are not to be believed. But the necessary corollary of that opinion is, that we should break off all diplomatic intercourse with Russia. Indeed, according to these wiseacres, we ought never to have held such intercourse with her; for their impeachment of her honesty and veracity extends back into the twilight of Russian history. It is not necessary to answer absurdities; but, as a matter of fact, the Emperor gave hostages for his good faith on this occasion. He exposed his plans, and thereby gave Lord Beaconsfield an opportunity of defeating them, if he thought them incompatible with 'the charter of our policy.' 'What is necessary to England,' said the Emperor, 'is the maintenance in principle of the Ottoman Empire, and the inviolability of Constantinople and the Straits.' It may indeed be questioned whether 'the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire,' either in principle or in fact, is 'necessary to England.' But the Czar may be excused for believing what English statesmen and publicists were constantly dinning into the ears of Europe. He accepted our Govern-



ment's definition of English policy, and he promised to respect it.

Has that promise been violated by the Treaty of San Stefano? The best answer to that question is to state the terms of peace which the Emperor of Russia frankly communicated to our Government before a single Russian soldier crossed the Danube. By comparing these with the Treaty of San Stefano, the reader will be able to judge for himself how far the promises of Russia have corresponded with her deeds.

This Memorandum,<sup>1</sup> in which the Emperor of Russia took the English Government into his confidence, bears the date of June 8, 1877, and the opening paragraph runs as follows :—

His Majesty the Emperor attaches the greatest importance to the maintenance of good relations between the two countries. He will make every effort to that end ; but the English Cabinet, on their side, must do the same.

‘With regard to Constantinople,’ the Memorandum proceeds, ‘our assurances must be understood to mean its possession or permanent occu-

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 15 (1878), pp. 1–2.

pation.<sup>1</sup> It would be a singular fact and without precedent if, at the outset of a war, one of the belligerents undertook beforehand not to pursue its military operations up to the walls of the capital.' But 'the English Ministry is fully assured that we shall under no circumstances remain at Constantinople . . . When once we have engaged in the war we cannot admit of any restrictions on our eventual operations. They remain entirely subordinate to the military requirements.'

It was impossible to have reserved in more explicit language the right of Russia to occupy Constantinople temporarily, and at the same time the right of judging for herself as to the circumstances which might render such an occupation necessary.

Having thus cleared the ground, the Memorandum states the terms on which the Emperor was willing to make peace at once, or any time before his army crossed the Balkans. In the latter case 'the terms of the Imperial Cabinet might be altered.' Until then they would be as follow :--

<sup>1</sup> The Foreign Office translation is ambiguous. The original is, 'Nos assurances ne peuvent porter que sur une prise de possession ou une occupation permanente.'

Bulgaria up to the Balkans<sup>1</sup> to be made an autonomous vassal province under the guarantee of Europe.

The Turkish troops and officials to be removed from it, and the fortresses disarmed and razed.

Self-government to be established in it with the support of a national militia to be organised as soon as possible.

The Powers to agree to assure to that part of Bulgaria which is to the south of the Balkans, as well as to the other Christian provinces of Turkey, the best possible guarantees for a regular administration.

Montenegro and Serbia to receive an increase of territory to be determined by common agreement.

Bosnia and Herzegovina to be provided with such institutions as may by common consent be judged compatible with their internal state and calculated to guarantee them a good indigenous administration.

These provinces being situated conterminously with Austria-Hungary gives the latter a right to a preponderating voice in their future organisation.

Servia, like Bulgaria, to remain under the suzerainty

<sup>1</sup> Two days later the Russian Ambassador was instructed to communicate the following correction to Lord Derby:— 'After a mature examination of the situation on the spot, Prince Gortchakow had come to the conclusion that the separation of Bulgaria into two provinces would be impracticable. Local information proved that Bulgaria must remain a single province, otherwise the most laborious and intelligent part of the Bulgarian population, and notably that which had most suffered from Turkish maladministration, would remain excluded from the autonomous institutions.'

of the Sultan ; the relations of the suzerain and the vassals to be defined in a manner to prevent disputes.

As regards Roumania, which has just proclaimed its independence, the Emperor is of opinion that this is a question which cannot be settled except by a general understanding.

If these conditions are accepted, the different Cabinets would be able to exercise a collective pressure on the Porte, warning it that if it refused it would be left to take the consequences of the war.

If the Porte sues for peace and accepts the terms enumerated above before our armies have crossed the line of the Balkans, Russia would agree to make peace, but reserves to herself the right of stipulating for certain special advantages as compensation for the costs of the war.

These advantages would not exceed the portion of Bessarabia ceded in 1856, as far as the northern branch of the Danube (that is to say, the delta formed by the mouths of that river remains excluded), and the cession of Batoum, with adjacent territory.

In this case Roumania could be compensated by a common agreement, either by the proclamation of its independence, or, if it remained a vassal State, by a portion of the Dobrudscha.

If Austria-Hungary on her side demanded compensation, either for the extension required by Russia, or as a security against the new arrangements above mentioned for the benefit of the Christian principalities in the Balkan Peninsula, Russia would not oppose her seeking

such compensation in Bosnia and partly in the Herzegovina.

Such are the bases to which His Majesty the Emperor would give his consent with a view of establishing an understanding with England and with Europe, and of arriving at a speedy peace.

Count Schouvaloff is authorised to sound Lord Derby ('pressentir l'opinion') on the subject of these conditions of peace, without concealing from him the value which the Imperial Cabinet attaches to a good understanding with the Cabinet of London.

Then follows this most important proviso :—

In thus indicating, with perfect openness, the object which the Emperor has in view, and which he will not exceed so long as the war is confined to this side of the Balkans, His Majesty offers a means of localizing the war, and preventing the dissolution of the Turkish Empire ; but it is important for the Emperor to know if, within the limits indicated, he can count upon the neutrality of England, *a neutrality which would exclude even a temporary occupation of Constantinople and the Straits by the latter Power.*

Let the passage which I have marked by italics be carefully noted. Russia there stipulates that, so long as she fulfils her part of the engagement 'the neutrality of England . . . shall exclude even a temporary occupation of Constantinople and the Straits by the latter Power.' The importance of



this stipulation cannot be exaggerated, as we shall see presently.

Did Her Majesty's Government make any objection to these terms? None, on the ground of 'British interests.' They asked Mr. Layard confidentially to sound the Porte with the view of discovering whether it would be willing to accept mediation on the Russian terms. Mr. Layard declined to do anything of the kind in a despatch which is too well known to need comment here.

On August 7, the Emperor was still willing to offer the same terms:—

The conditions of peace required by the Emperor are those lately communicated to Lord Derby by Count Schouvaloff, and will remain the same as long as England maintains her position of neutrality. If, however, England abandons that position, matters will have entered a new phase. His Majesty has no ideas of annexation beyond that, perhaps, of the territory Russia lost in 1856, and perhaps that of a certain portion of Asia Minor.<sup>1</sup>

What answer did the English Government make to this second communication of the Russian terms of peace? In language of great friendliness they expressed their 'satisfaction' at the moderation of the Emperor's conditions.<sup>2</sup> Now if the

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 9 (1878), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 3.

reader will compare these conditions with the Treaty of San Stefano, he will find that they differ from it in no essential particular—certainly in none that concerns ‘the charter of our policy’ as laid down by Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Derby.

By-and-by the Russian army crossed the Balkans and occupied Adrianople. The English Government thereupon wished to pledge Russia against even a temporary occupation of Constantinople. Russia renewed her former assurances, but refused to go beyond them.<sup>1</sup> Lord Derby then asked Prince Gortchakoff to pledge his Government not to occupy Gallipoli. The Prince gave the pledge on condition that Gallipoli should not be occupied by an English force, and that Turkish regular troops should not concentrate there. Lord Derby accepted these conditions. Yet regular troops were concentrated at Gallipoli, and Russia adhered to her engagement notwithstanding.<sup>2</sup>

At this point the diplomatic situation is as follows. Russia disclaims any intention of acquiring Constantinople, but reserves the right of occupying it temporarily should ‘the march of events’—an elastic phrase—require it. She will not occupy

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 3 (1878), pp. 1-3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 4, 6, 11, 13.

Gallipoli on the two conditions already specified—one of which, however, had been violated to the prejudice of Russia. Our Government is, moreover, engaged to a 'neutrality which would exclude even a temporary occupation of Constantinople and the Straits by the latter Power' (see p. 227).

Now mark what happened. On January 24, the Russian Ambassador called on Lord Derby and told him that the Turks had violated the engagement as to Gallipoli, but that the Russian Government meant nevertheless to 'remain faithful to their intentions, and were even going beyond them.'<sup>1</sup> Yet on that very day Admiral Hornby was in receipt of the following telegram :—

ADMIRALTY, 23rd January 1878, 7 P.M.,  
to

ADMIRAL HORNBY, Vourla.

MOST SECRET.

Sail at once for the Dardanelles, and proceed with the Fleet now with you to Constantinople. Abstain from taking any part in the contest between Russia and Turkey, but the waterway of the Straits is to be kept open, and in the event of tumult at Constantinople you are to protect life and property of British subjects.

Use your judgment in detaching such vessels as you

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 3 (1878), p. 13.

may think necessary to preserve the waterway of the Dardanelles, but do not go above Constantinople.

Report your departure, and communicate with Besika Bay for possible further orders, but do not wait if none are there.

Keep your destination absolutely secret.—Acknowledge.

I humbly submit that the Government which perpetrated this flagrant breach of its engagement with Russia is hardly in a position to accuse the latter of duplicity, secrecy, or bad faith. Sir Stafford Northcote admitted in the House of Commons that the fleet had orders to force a passage in the event of a firman being refused. With remarkable forbearance the Russian Government took no notice of the incident, and Lord Derby's return to office was purchased by the retreat of the British fleet to Besika Bay.

On February 5, at 5 P.M., Mr. Layard telegraphed the following information to his Government :—

Although the armistice has been concluded, the Russians are pushing on towards Constantinople. Notwithstanding the protest of the Turkish Commander, the Turkish troops were compelled by General Strogoff to evacuate Silivria last night, and the protest of the Turkish Commander was refused. The Russian General declared

that, according to his orders, it was absolutely necessary that he should occupy Tchataldja to-day.

At 5.15 P.M. the following day this telegram was in the hands of the Government. It could not have been more opportunely timed, and the dramatic effect of it was heightened by the intimation that it had come round by Bombay, because, according to Mr. Layard, the 'telegraph with Europe was cut off except through Bombay,' a statement which, like many of Mr. Layard's statements, was incorrect. It served his purpose, however, of paralysing the Opposition and passing the Vote of Credit. As to the telegram itself, it was true in fact, but suggested an absolutely false impression. It concealed half the truth, and thereby suggested a direct falsehood. The impression conveyed was that the Russians were advancing on Constantinople in violation of the armistice. The fact was that they had advanced on Tchataldja, forty miles from Constantinople, in fulfilment of the armistice.

After the Russians entered the lines of Tchataldja the British fleet was ordered again to Constantinople—this time openly and for the alleged purpose of protecting British subjects in case of a Mussulman rising. The *Times* immediately



stigmatised this plea as a hypocritical pretext, and asserted—what everybody knew—that what was in fact intended was a demonstration against Russia. The other Powers at the same time declared that there was no danger whatever of any disturbances at Constantinople, and they declined accordingly to ask permission for any of their war-ships to enter the Dardanelles. The firman for which our Government asked was refused by the Sultan, and our fleet, by the orders of the Cabinet, forced its way into the Dardanelles against the emphatic protest of the Sultan.

Still the Russian Government forbore to resent this violent and menacing proceeding. In a courteous despatch Prince Gortchakoff accepted our plea, and intimated that some Russian troops would co-operate with the British fleet in its humane and pacific mission to Constantinople. Lord Derby immediately protested, and declared that the cases were not parallel :

In the one case the ships of a friendly Power are sent into the proximity of the city in order that they may afford the protection which British subjects are entitled to require of their Government in case of need ; in the other the troops of a hostile army are marched into the town in violation of the existing armistice.

That is to say, the forcible entrance of the British fleet into the waters of Constantinople against the protest of the Sultan was a friendly act, while the entrance of some Russian troops into the suburbs of Constantinople, with the Sultan's permission, and on precisely the same errand as the British fleet, would have been a 'hostile' act! The result was that the English fleet cast anchor in the Sea of Marmara, about an hour's distance from Constantinople, and the Russian troops marched to San Stefano, about double the distance in point of time. Thus, while deprecating the approach of the Russians to Constantinople, we have actually forced them to take virtual possession of it. First of all, we stipulate that they shall not take permanent possession of it. The Russian Government agrees, but reserves the right to occupy it temporarily. We acquiesce with 'satisfaction.' The Russians reach Adrianople, and at once we earnestly entreat them not to occupy the capital or Gallipoli. They agree on condition that we shall land no troops at Gallipoli, nor send any part of our fleet into the Bosphorus or Dardanelles. We ratify the engagement, and then immediately send 'most secret orders' to our

Admiral at Besika Bay to enter the Bosphorus *nolens volens* of the Sultan. The Russians answer this menace by embracing the lines of Tchataldja within the terms of the armistice, and we retaliate by passing a war vote in a panic. The fleet is ordered a second time into forbidden waters, and passes the Dardanelles by an act of war against the Sultan. The Russian troops, thereupon, occupy San Stefano, and we denounce their conduct as a breach of faith. Peace is signed ; yet our fleet remains in the Sea of Marmara in violation of the Treaty of Paris. Russia objects, and we declare that our fleet shall remain where it is so long as the troops occupy the environs of Constantinople. The Russian troops thereupon, by agreement with the Porte, move towards Buyukdère, for the purpose of embarking. The British Ambassador immediately prevents embarkation by threatening to bring the British fleet to Constantinople. And all this fussy mischief-making is defended on the plea that it is necessary for the purpose of keeping the Russians out of Constantinople ; the truth being that, for all military purposes, the Russians have been in possession of Constantinople since the middle of February—and this entirely in consequence of our infatuated policy.

The rest of Europe, meanwhile, has been looking on in mingled contempt, wonderment, and distrust at these reckless freaks of British statesmanship. And what is the explanation of it all? We are told that our interests are 'undermined' by the Treaty of San Stefano. But how stand the facts? All the clauses of the Treaty of San Stefano which can by possibility touch British interests were communicated to our Government in the middle of last June, and, so far from objecting, they received them with 'satisfaction.' Russia engaged not to touch Egypt or the Suez Canal: she has not touched them. She promised to reserve the question of the Straits for the decision of a European Congress: she has reserved it. She stipulated for the right to occupy, while she disclaimed the intention of holding, Constantinople: she has resisted the temptation to occupy Constantinople, though urged thereto by a victorious army, and provoked by the forcible entrance of the English fleet into the Sea of Marmara.

But let us look at these 'undermined' interests, and see if we can discover the damage they have received. They are four in number: and with

respect to two of them (Egypt and the Suez Canal), Mr. Cross, in his famous speech, said truly that if either were attacked by Russia, 'it would not be a question of the interests of England, but of the whole world.' As Russia is not very likely to challenge the hostility of 'the whole world,' we may safely consider that two at least of the British interests which make up 'the charter of our policy' have escaped the 'undermining' craft of the wily Ignatieff. There remain Constantinople and the Straits. But the importance of Constantinople and the Straits to England depends on their being used as a base of operation against India. Destroy the *nexus* between these two ideas, and you destroy the special value of Constantinople as a factor in British policy. England will be less interested in its fate than almost any of the great Powers of Europe.



## CHAPTER X.

## RUSSIA AND INDIA.

FROM a 'British interest' point of view the future of Constantinople concerns England less than it concerns any of the Great Powers, save only in its bearing on the supposed designs of Russia on India.

Now, if Russia has no designs on India, her possession of Constantinople would not greatly concern us. Has she any such designs? 'It is not at all to our interests,' says the Memorandum of Russian policy communicated to our Government last June, 'to trouble England in her Indian possessions.' Nor would it be at all to the interests of Russia, I believe, to possess herself of Constantinople. Let us examine the question, then, by the test of Russian interests. And first, as to India. It is the settled belief of a large section of Englishmen that Russia is pursuing her conquests in

Central Asia for the purpose of pushing her frontier to some convenient point from which she may be able to invade India. In considering the possibility of such an enterprise, it is necessary to remember that the conditions of warfare have greatly changed since the oriental expedition of Alexander the Great. An army now requires a very different train from that which would have sufficed for the days of spears and bows and arrows. The campaign which has just ended has lasted more than nine months, reckoning from the crossing of the Turkish frontier to the signature of the armistice at Adrianople; and it has required the active service, from first to last, of at least 400,000 soldiers. Yet Turkey lies close to the enemy's frontier. No hostile population intervened, and no physical barriers of any moment had to be surmounted. We may safely assert, therefore, that a prudent commander would not undertake the conquest of India from any base of operation open to Russia with an army of less than 500,000. Half that number would probably be required to keep open his lines of communication. But let us suppose, for argument's sake, that an army of 200,000 would give Russia a bare chance

of success. That host, with all its necessary equipments, Russia would have to transport through hundreds of miles of what is, to a large extent, a trackless waste. Through most of it there are no other roads than camel-paths. An army of the size I have supposed would therefore require, according to the estimate of military experts, a transport service of about 400,000 camels, 300,000 horses, and 1,500,000 camp followers. The territory to be traversed is poor, and singularly ill-suited to supply the wants of so huge a multitude. But let us suppose that by some miracle the difficulty could be overcome. Even under the most favourable circumstances the invading army would take many months to traverse the distance between its base and our frontier. And what should we be doing meanwhile? We should be doing two things. We should be making preparations to meet the attack on a scale commensurate with the occasion and with our vast resources, and our agents would be busy stirring up disaffection in the rear of the invaders and hampering their communication over an extent of roadless territory so vast as to be incapable of being effectively guarded. Considering the difficulties and dangers Russia had to en

counter in invading so puny a Power as Khiva, it is easy to estimate the risks she would have to face in a march to India. Financially the enterprise would be most ruinous. According to Major Wood, a competent authority, every round shot now brought to Central Asia costs Russia 2*l.* in transport alone. What would a park of artillery cost by the time it reached the frontiers of British India?

But let us postulate another miracle, and assume that the Russian army escaped all the perils and difficulties which I have indicated, and which, in fact, would be insurmountable. Let us suppose that it arrived 200,000 strong, and thoroughly equipped, at the base of the range of lofty mountains which guard our Indian Empire. I believe I am correct in saying that the only practicable route for any invading army that Russia could send against us in India would, according to the best military opinion, be through Afghanistan. This would limit such a force as I have supposed to the choice of one of two passes—the Kyber and the Bolan. A British army received a generation ago a memorable lesson as to the difficulty of traversing the Kyber Pass in the face of a comparatively insignifi-

cant foe. The passage of the Bolan Pass would be hardly less perilous when disputed by a determined adversary. The mouths of these passes are in our possession, besides a series of detached forts and military stations scattered along our frontier at the foot of the mountains. Here, supposing it to advance so far without molestation, the Russian army would find us fresh and ready to give it a warm reception,—behind us boundless resources in men and money, plains seamed by railways, and an ocean owning our undisputed sway. Defeat to the Russian army under such circumstances would be absolute ruin. Its prestige gone, swarms of enemies would rise up behind and around it to cut off its retreat. And the blow of so great a disaster would reverberate far beyond the Indus ; it would imperil not only the Asiatic position of Russia—it would shake her to her centre even in Europe.<sup>1</sup>

Let us, however, make another concession for the sake of argument. Let us suppose that our

<sup>1</sup> It may be as well to state that the whole of this chapter was written before I saw Mr. Laing's able article in the *Fortnightly Review* of March. In fact, I used the same line of argument against a Russian invasion of India in a volume entitled *The Eastern Question: its Facts and Fallacies*, which I published a year ago. My calculations are chiefly taken from the able writings of General Sir John Adye.



arms received a check in our first encounter with Russia. This, no doubt, would be a serious mishap, as it might encourage disaffection on the part of some of our native population. But we should have made ample preparation for such a contingency, and, with the certainty of being able to rely on the loyalty of our most warlike tribes in the emergency, we should be able to dispute the advance of Russia step by step, while at the same time harassing her in the rear.

But if, contrary to all reasonable calculations, Russia should succeed in breaking our power in India and driving us to our ships, even in that case she would be only at the threshold of her difficulties. Having got rid of us, she would have to begin afresh the conquest of India for herself. Her only chance against us would lie in the seduction of some of our Indian subjects from their allegiance, thus turning their arms against us. But it is safe to say that no appreciable section of the people of India would help Russia to break our yoke for the purpose of having her own imposed in its stead. If they assisted her to get rid of us at all, it would certainly be in order to get rid of foreign rule altogether. So that Russia,

after driving us out of the country, would find herself surrounded by hostile populations — both those who helped her against us and those who fought on our side—all eager to drive her after us.

The defeat of the English rule in India, therefore, supposing it possible, would be only the beginning of Russia's troubles. She would have to subdue India to her own rule and reorganise its civil service; and no one who will take the trouble to think out the problem can doubt that long before its solution India would accomplish the ruin of Russia. The task is one which, under such favourable conditions as Russia could not expect, has taken ourselves more than a century to fulfil.

Thus we see that, when the theory of a Russian conquest of India is dragged out into the light and confronted with what the late Emperor Napoleon used to call 'the irresistible logic of facts,' it is found to have no more substance in it than a nursery bogey. Lord Hardinge, who afterwards succeeded the Duke of Wellington as commander-in-chief, characterised the fear of a Russian invasion of India as 'a political nightmare.' 'Lord Har-

dinge is quite right,' said the Duke, when this was reported to him. 'Rely upon it, you have nothing to fear from Russia in that direction.'

So much as to the possibility of Russia conquering India if she wished it. But does she wish it? She is a country which is supposed, even by those who fear and dislike her most, to understand her own interest uncommonly well. Would it, then, be to the interest of Russia to acquire India, even if she could do so without firing a shot or sacrificing a man? My belief is that, on the mere ground of an enlightened self-interest, Russia would decline the perilous gift of India, if England were to make her the offer of it. I will go further, and hazard the opinion that there is not a single State in Europe which would accept India at our hands. Indeed, I doubt whether we should accept it ourselves at this moment if it were offered to us by a foreign Power. Being there, we must of course make the best of our position. We have contracted responsibilities towards the people of India which we are morally bound to discharge, even at the cost of some detriment to interests which are purely British. But it may be questioned whether our profit from India is not more than counter-

balanced by the loss. India gives employment to some portion of our educated population, and a change of rulers might possibly affect a certain class of British merchandise injuriously for a season. On the other hand, the possession of India adds considerably to our annual expenditure, and cripples us seriously as a European Power. The protection afforded by the 'streak of silver sea' may be sneered at; but it is a very real protection. Not only does it make this country almost invulnerable to attack; it affords at the same time a good security against any reasonable motive for attack. States whose frontiers touch each other have the materials for a quarrel ever ready to their hands. Their relations are always liable to be disturbed by questions of boundary, or of race or religion. There is scarcely a State on the continent of Europe which would not gladly rectify its frontier at the expense of its neighbours. The frontier of England was made by nature, and cannot be altered by man. Were Ireland separated from France by no stronger barrier than a narrow river or a mountain range, it might at this moment be a French province. India is our great weakness as a military power. It keeps our rela-

tions with Russia—most needlessly, as I think, yet as a matter of fact—in a state of chronic friction ; and if we were engaged in war with Russia or with any other Power, half our strength would be neutralised by the necessity of keeping a large army in India to prevent a rising of our Mussulman population.

These are considerations which would certainly prevent any English Government from running even a moderate risk for the acquisition of India, though India is undoubtedly more profitable to us than it would be to any other Power. Yet a number of sane people among us are dominated by an insane fear that Russia would risk her existence to wrest India from our grasp. Of what use would India be to her ? It would be more likely to impoverish than to enrich her exchequer, and in the event of war with this country, India would be a source of much greater weakness to her than it is now to us, with our undisputed command of the sea. Nor does Russia need any outlet, as we do, for a redundant population. On the contrary, her population is far too sparse for the area over which she rules. In short, if the enemies of Russia could devise a scheme more certain than any other to



lead her to ruin, it would be to tempt her to engage in the desperate hazard of a war of conquest in India. So that, in refusing to believe that Russia harbours any design of the sort, I am not crediting her with any transcendental unselfishness or any extraordinary freedom from political ambition. I am crediting her with nothing more than the possession of reasoning faculties, and a lively sense of her own interests. Even the most timid or most violent of Russophobists do not believe that Russia is a nation of lunatics ; yet they speak and act as if this were their settled conviction.

But it may be answered that Russia, without intending to acquire India for herself, would be likely to use her position in Central Asia or Armenia to intrigue against us in India. And this will certainly be the case if we succeed in convincing Russia that British interests are in eternal antagonism to Russian interests. In that case it will be the interest of Russia, as of any other Power in similar circumstances, to do us all the mischief she can. But I have shown that there is no necessary antagonism between the interests of Russia and our interests as rulers of India. Where, then, does this conflict of interests lie ? In Constantino-

ple? Now, I do not wish to see the Russians in possession of Constantinople (I do not mean a temporary occupation, which is a different matter), for the same reason that I should not wish to see the French, or for that matter the English, in possession of it; namely, because they have no business there. I wish to see Constantinople restored to those who are politically the residuary legatees of its present possessors. The Turks have never established a righteous claim of ownership either to Constantinople or to any other territory under their withering rule. The so-called right of conquest is simply the right of the sword; and that is a right which is never legitimate unless sanctioned by justice. A people deprived of the elementary rights of justice and humanity, which is the condition of the Rayahs of Turkey in law and fact, owe no allegiance to the governing Power, and are justified in rising against it as often as a fair chance of success presents itself. Length of time cannot convert brigandage into a legitimate rule or consecrate slavery into lawful ownership. The rule of the Turk has ever been that of the brigand and the slave-owner, and it was one of the cardinal blunders of the Treaty of Paris to admit him into

the society of civilised States. Constantinople, therefore, has never belonged to the Sultan as of right; and if it cannot at present be made the capital of a Greek or Slav State, or Confederation of States, it might surely be made a Free City under the protection of Europe.

But if I were a believer in the sordid gospel of British interests before all things, and at the same time feared a Russian invasion of India, I should consider it part of my mission as a British patriot to do what I could to entice Russia to Constantinople. For Russia at Constantinople would mean Russia in command of some of the fairest and most fertile regions of the globe—regions now lying desolate under the blight of Turkish misrule; but which would again blossom as the rose under the fostering influences of civilised government. An idea of the withering curse of Mussulman domination may be gathered from one pregnant fact mentioned by Professor Paparrigopoulos, of Athens, in his ‘History of the Hellenic Nation.’<sup>1</sup> In the beginning of the thirteenth century the annual revenue of the Byzantine Empire was 26,000,000*l.* sterling, equi-

<sup>1</sup> *Ἱστορία τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ Ἔθνους*, vol. iii. bk. x.

valent to about 130,000,000*l.* sterling at the present day. Yet at that time the chief part of Asia Minor, with its numerous flourishing cities, had been wrested from the Byzantine Empire by the Turks. Lower Italy, too, had been seized by the Normans, and the Crusades had entailed losses which seriously reduced the public revenue. Freedom from customs' dues and other privileges had been gradually granted to the Venetian, Genoese, and Pisan Colonies, which had settled in Constantinople and other parts of the Empire; and this made another hole in the public revenue. In short, the Turkish Empire of our day possesses an extent of territory far more productive than that owned by the Byzantine Empire in the early part of the thirteenth century. Yet, whereas the public revenue of the former amounted to 130,000,000*l.* sterling, that of the latter before the commencement of the present war was only about 18,000,000*l.*

The process of decay might be illustrated in detail. Let a few examples suffice. And first, as to agriculture. Turkey possesses all the conditions favourable to agricultural development in a degree unapproached by any other country in the world: climate, geographical position, fertility of soil, easy

channels of exportation. Possessing the climates, it yields the fruits and products, of all the zones. Astride on Europe and Asia, it commands the richest territories of both continents, and is still sovereign over the fertile valley of the Nile. It abounds in lakes, is indented by numerous bays and gulfs, and is washed by six seas, all which offer it rare advantages for maritime commerce. The country is, besides, intersected by broad and deep rivers, ready to bear its produce to the sea : in Europe, the Danube, Save, Morava, Sereth, and Olto ; in Asia, the Euphrates, Tigris, Kizil-Irmak, and the storied Jordan ; in Africa, the fertilising Nile. In no country of the world have the gifts of God been lavished in richer profusion. In none have they been so grossly and so systematically abused by the perverseness of man. The silence of desolation now broods over vast tracts of land which once waved with golden harvests, and over scores of flourishing cities which were the homes of busy industries and an advanced civilisation. Regions which formerly supported the capitals of ancient kingdoms—Pergamos, Sardis, Cyzica, Prusium, Troy, Nicomedia, and many more—have been reduced by Turkish rule to cheerless solitudes, broken at intervals by the tents of nomad Kurds or



Turcomans. According to Ubicini, who wrote twenty years ago as an apologist of the Turkish Government, the annual produce of corn in Asia Minor was then estimated at 25,000,000 Turkish kilès, representing a value of about 3,000,000*l*. And he thinks that this amount might easily be increased tenfold, 'if the great productiveness of the soil were turned to account.'<sup>1</sup> 'The same remark applies,' he adds, 'to all other productions which serve for local consumption or for exportation.'

The decay of every kind of manufacturing industry is not less conspicuous than that of agriculture. A few examples must suffice on this head also. In 1812 there were two thousand looms of muslin at work in Tirnova and Scutari. In 1841 the number had fallen to two hundred, and I question whether they now reach one hundred. Diarbekir and Broussa, which were once so famous for their velvets, satins, and silk stuffs, have been ruined by Turkish misrule, and do not now produce a tenth part of what they yielded even fifty years ago. Aleppo and Bagdad tell the same tale.

Turkey also abounds in mineral wealth. It

<sup>1</sup> *Lettres sur la Turquie*, i. p. 307.

possesses copper mines which yield thirty per cent. of ore, while the best English mines, I believe, yield no more than ten per cent. And it has coal in abundance within easy access of its iron and mineral ore. In Asia Minor alone eighty-four mines were in full operation when the country passed into the hands of the Turks. I believe the number now worked is under a dozen, and these yield, under Turkish mismanagement, but a small part of their wealth.

Am I not right, then, in saying that a policy which had for its supreme object to keep Russia away from India would welcome her to Constantinople? She has no motive to vex us in India, except in so far as it might enable her to checkmate us in Turkey. On the other hand, we have no motive, from an exclusively British-interest point of view, to checkmate Russia in Turkey, except for the purpose of preventing her from troubling us in India. But put Russia in possession of the fair lands which now lie fallow under the dominion of the Turk, and can anybody out of Bedlam imagine that she would turn her back on the buried treasures which lie so invitingly at her feet in order to waste her resources on the stake—fatal if lost, profitless if won—of conquering India?

Prince Gortchakoff might well declare that so egregious an absurdity belongs to the 'domain of political mythology.'<sup>1</sup>

But is there any evidence that Russia really covets Constantinople at all? Successive Emperors and Governments have disclaimed any such desire. But let us put aside all such disclaimers, and let us again test the question by the touchstone of Russian interests. Would it be to the interest of Russia to be mistress of Constantinople? I believe, on the contrary, that it would be her ruin. The possession of Constantinople would force her to annex a considerable portion of territory inhabited by populations whose gratitude for deliverance from Turkish oppression would soon change into hatred of their new masters. But let us suppose, against all probability, that Russia succeeded in reconciling with each other and to her own rule the various races of her new territory. She would then have to face a new difficulty. The attraction of Constantinople would be such that the political centre of gravity of the Empire would inevitably settle on the Bosphorus. The result would be a conflict of interests. Moscow would

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 1 (1877), p. 736.

be jealous of Constantinople, and Constantinople would look down on Moscow. Byzantium and Muscovy would refuse to amalgamate, and the Russian Empire would go to pieces in the vain effort of mutual assimilation. All intelligent Russians know this, and, consequently, do not wish to possess Constantinople. What they do wish they have more than once frankly avowed. Three months after the Peace of Adrianople, the late Chancellor Nesselrode wrote as follows to the Grand Duke Constantine of that day, uncle of the present Emperor :—

There was nothing to prevent our armies from marching on Constantinople and overthrowing the Turkish Empire. No Power would have opposed, no danger menaced us, if we had given the finishing stroke to the Ottoman monarchy in Europe. But, in the opinion of the Emperor, that monarchy, weakened and under the protection of Russia, is more advantageous to our interests, political and commercial, than any new combination which might force us either to extend our territories by conquest, or to substitute for the Ottoman Empire some States which would not be slow to compete with us in power, in civilisation, in industry, and in wealth. It is on this principle that his Imperial Majesty has always regulated his relations with the Divan.

The letter from which this extract is taken, let

it be remembered, was a private letter addressed to a member of the Imperial family. So that the writer had no motive for disguising his real sentiments.

In the summer of 1853 Count Nesselrode made a similar disclaimer on behalf of his Imperial Master ; and in the course of the same year the Emperor held his memorable conversation with Sir Hamilton Seymour on the condition of the Sick Man and the destiny of his inheritance. I quote the following extracts :—

With regard to Constantinople, I am not under the same illusions as Catherine II. On the contrary, I regard the immense extent of Russia as her real danger. I should like to see Turkey strong enough to be able to make herself respected by the other Powers. But if she is doomed to perish, Russia and England should come to an agreement as to what should be put in her place. I propose to form the Danubian Principalities, with Servia and Bulgaria, into one independent State, placed under the protection of Russia ; and I declare that Russia has no ambition to extend her sovereignty over the territories of Turkey.

England might take Egypt and Crete ; but I could not allow her to establish herself at Constantinople, and this I say frankly. On the other hand, I would undertake to promise, on my part, never to take Constantinople, if the arrangement which I propose should be concluded



between Russia and England. If, indeed, Turkey were to go suddenly to pieces before the conclusion of that convention, and I should find it necessary to occupy Constantinople, I would not, of course, promise not to do so.

On a subsequent occasion the Emperor said :—

I would not permit any Power so strong as England to occupy the Bosphorus, by which the Dnieper and the Don find their way into the Mediterranean. While the Black Sea is between the Don, the Dnieper, and the Bosphorus, the command of that Strait would destroy the commerce of Russia and close to her fleet the road to the Mediterranean. If an Emperor of Russia should one day chance to conquer Constantinople, or should find himself forced to occupy it permanently, and fortify it with a view to making it impregnable, from that day would date the decline of Russia. If I did not transfer my residence to the Bosphorus, my son, or at least my grandson, would. The change would certainly be made sooner or later ; for the Bosphorus is warmer, more agreeable, more beautiful than Petersburg or Moscow ; and if once the Czar were to take up his abode at Constantinople, Russia would cease to be Russia. No Russian would like that. There is not a Russian who would not like to see a Christian crusade for the delivery of the mosque of Saint Sophia ; I should like it as much as anyone. But nobody would like to see the Kremlin transported to the Seven Towers.

These are the views of all thoughtful Russians ;

but their chief recommendation is that they are the dictates of common sense and political prudence. The practical protectorate of an impotent Turkey ruling over a cluster of petty vassal Principalities will suit Russia much better than the actual possession of Constantinople with its contiguous territory. But whatever objections may be urged on other grounds, our Indian Empire runs no risk from either contingency. The more that Russia gravitates towards the South, the less likely is she to meddle with India.

Thus we see that the policy of Russia, tried by the rule of selfishness, is in no way antagonistic to British interests. In truth, there are not two States in the world whose interests so imperatively demand mutual co-operation on the part of their respective Governments. Let it go forth throughout the East that there is an *entente cordiale* between Russia and England, and neither country need fear any rebellion on the part of its Asiatic subjects. It is in our mutual hostility that the hopes of the disaffected lie.

What, then, ought to be the policy of England in the present emergency? I think I have in the preceding pages given some good reasons to show

that there is no necessary antagonism between British and Russian interests. Russia has no more idea of conquering India than she has of capturing the man in the moon. Not being a nation of idiots, the Russians know that the one enterprise would be almost as feasible and quite as profitable as the other. But if the notion that Russia meditates the conquest of India is so utterly groundless and irrational, how shall we account for its dominating the minds of so many able men, some of them remarkable for political capacity and for experience in affairs? As well ask me to account for any of the myriad superstitions that have at various times awed and vexed mankind. Why did the laws of England condemn innocent women to be burnt as witches? Why did the same laws visit with capital punishment a theft in a shop to the amount of five shillings? Why was Sir Samuel Romilly's Bill for the abolition of that atrocious law rejected in the House of Lords by a majority of three to one--the majority including the most eminent members of the Episcopal Bench and all the Law Lords, and being backed by the unanimous recommendation of all the judges in the land? Why did the Duke

of Wellington and a large proportion of the ablest men in the kingdom believe that the Reform Bill of 1832 involved the ruin of the State? Why did Mr. Disraeli declare in 1866 that Mr. Gladstone's very moderate Reform Bill would 'change England from a first-rate empire to a third-rate republic'<sup>1</sup>? Why did the same minister maintain, two years ago, that the title of Empress of India would be an eternal security to our Indian Empire against the ambitious designs of Russia? What did Lord Palmerston believe about the Suez Canal? Read his words:—

It may safely be said that as a commercial undertaking it is a bubble scheme, which has been taken up on political grounds and in antagonism to English interests and English policy. . . . The political objects of the enterprise are hostility to England in every possible modification of the scheme.

But why should the French nation plan this subtle scheme for the ruin of England? Lord Palmerston had his answer ready:—

We have on the other side of the Channel [he wrote in 1862] a people who, say what they may, hate us as a

<sup>1</sup> Disraeli's *Speeches on Parliamentary Reform*, p. 397.

nation from the bottom of their hearts, and would make any sacrifice to inflict a deep humiliation upon England.<sup>1</sup>

When Lord Palmerston spoke and wrote thus he was the popular and trusted Prime Minister of England, and probably the majority of Englishmen shared his opinions. There is probably not a sane man in the kingdom now who does not consider those opinions more fit for the babble of the nursery than for the debates of a deliberative assembly. Yet we are separated from that delusion by a period of no more than sixteen years. I venture to predict that long before we span the same space of time lying before us the Russian hobgoblin will have been laid in the spacious tomb of obsolete superstitions, and the only wonder will be that sane men and sensible women ever allowed themselves to be disturbed by so unsubstantial a phantom.

<sup>1</sup> Ashley's *Life of Palmerston*, ii. pp. 224, 326.



## CHAPTER XI.

## ENGLAND AND THE CONGRESS.

I THINK I may now assume that we have nothing to fear from any designs of Russia on India, so long as we deal frankly and justly with her, and do not wantonly make it a matter of vital interest to her to give check to our policy in Europe by creating disaffection in India. But if Russia has no designs on India, it is plain that our chief interest in the terms of peace lies in their bearing on the future of the liberated provinces. Two courses are thus open to us. We may pursue a policy inspired by an unworthy jealousy or an unreasoning fear of Russia, and resolve accordingly to abate as much as possible the charter of rights which she offers to the victims of a long and cruel bondage ; or we may co-operate with her and the other Powers in the work of reconstruction, and even in advocating, if we see a chance, an extension

of freedom. By the former policy we shall be gratuitously throwing away an opportunity—perhaps our last—of ingratiating ourselves with the future rulers of the lands which have virtually ceased to be the Turkish Empire. We shall at the same time be playing into the hands of Russia with a maladroit skill which will serve her much better than the cunning of Ignatieff or the skill of Gortchakoff. We shall compel the liberated races of Turkey to look to her as their only friend and protector, and we shall be giving Russia at the same time a plausible excuse for future intervention. By the latter policy we shall, in the first place, be making some atonement for past wrongs. England must bear the largest share of blame for the crime—for crime it is—of having turned for so long a time ‘the keys of hell’—to use Mr. Lowe’s forcible expression—upon ‘the prisoners of hope.’ The Rayahs of Turkey would long ago have broken their fetters and achieved their freedom, if the brutal—and not more brutal than purblind—selfishness of the Christian Powers, and of England in particular, had not conspired with the tyrant to keep his victims down. Let us then, even at the eleventh hour, grace at least with our benediction

a deliverance which we did nothing to accomplish and much to thwart. Should there be a question of revising the bounds of the liberated territory, let us make sure that if any retrenchment is made, not an inch of soil on which the sun of freedom has smiled shall be given back to bondage. If Bulgaria is to be a loser, let Greece, not Turkey, be the gainer. But surely the better policy would be—better in the interest not of humanity merely, but of the peace of Europe—that, if the Sultan is still to retain any sovereign power in Europe, his direct sway should not extend beyond Constantinople and its environs. When we are about it, why not give Greece at once the provinces to which she has a fair claim? To leave them under Turkish administration, while the Slav provinces are rejoicing in freedom, would be not less short-sighted than cruel. And if the Greeks are to be released from the yoke of the Pashas, the rule of the Turk in Europe is gone. And who can regret it? He came in as a scourge, and as a scourge he has remained to this day. Yet in the hour of his doom I would deal gently even with the Turk. The Greek War of Independence, with its imminent conclusion, ought to be a sufficient warnin

against the folly of attempting to put artificial bounds to the natural development of a vigorous nationality.

Let vested interests be respected. Let the liberated provinces pay tribute enough to support the Sultan and his Court during his lifetime ; but let it be understood that no fresh interests can be created. Let civil and religious freedom be at the same time secured to the Mussulman population on their passing under Christian rule. This would surely be the kindest policy for the Turk himself. His dominion is gone beyond the possibility of restoration, and 'he hates him that would upon the rack of this tough world stretch him out longer.'

There was a rumour that Prince Bismarck had a policy, worthy of the occasion and of his own political genius, to propose to the Congress. According to this rumour, it was his intention to counteract Russian preponderance in South-eastern Europe, not by abridging the freedom of the Slavs, but by conferring the same boon on the Greeks and Albanians. The European half of the Turkish Empire would have been broken up, and its *dissecta membra* would be distributed in equitable propor-

tions among Greeks and Slavs—Austria and Italy at the same time receiving their share of compensation.

But this and all other plans for settling the Eastern Question have been upset by what looks like a policy of gratuitous perverseness on the part of our own Government. To the very last they have opposed themselves not to Russia merely, but to the whole of Europe ; and now even the Turks fight shy of them. Let us see how the facts stand. At the commencement of the war between Russia and Turkey we offered Russia certain conditions in return for our neutrality. These conditions Russia accepted, and she has scrupulously fulfilled her engagement ; while our Government, as I have proved by their own published documents, have on more than one occasion broken faith with Russia. Every point in 'the charter of our policy' has been reserved by Russia, not only for the discussion, but for the decision of the Congress. But the preliminaries of the Congress are no sooner settled than the English Government begins to raise difficulties. The other Powers are satisfied. England alone stands aloof. And why ? It is against precedent to pledge any



one Power to a particular course of action before entering the Congress. It was not done in the Congress of Vienna. It was not done in the Congress of Paris. A Congress is not a tribunal whose awards are binding on any of its members ; it is a friendly gathering of Sovereign Powers to adjust differences by amicable discussion. No member can veto, not even a majority can veto, the discussion of any question which may be flung into the arena. The minority can claim liberty of discussion, and the majority can only protest, and, if they think fit, withdraw. Cavour introduced the question of Italy into the Congress of Paris, and the Austrian Plenipotentiary on that occasion exercised the right which Russia now claims—he refused to accept the discussion. Russia’s claim has been perversely—I wish I could think not maliciously—misrepresented as a claim to veto discussion on certain questions. Russia has made no such claim. She has communicated the Treaty of San Stefano separately to the Five Powers, and she concedes to each and all of them the right of raising a discussion on any of its clauses. But she claims for herself the same liberty which she concedes to others—neither more nor less. They may discuss

all the clauses of the Treaty. She may decline to discuss some of them.

‘As different interpretations have been given to the liberty of appreciation and action which Russia thinks it right to reserve to herself at the Congress, the Imperial Cabinet defines the meaning of the term in the following manner :—

‘It leaves to the other Powers the liberty of raising such questions at the Congress as they may think it fit to discuss, and reserves to itself the liberty of accepting or not accepting the discussion of these questions.’

This is what Lord Beaconsfield professes to consider a case of ‘great emergency,’ calling for the immediate mobilisation of our reserves and the preparation of an expeditionary force to be landed on some point of menace to the Russian army in Roumelia. Our children will hardly credit the mingled wickedness and folly of this gasconading policy. Is there a nation in Europe which would, under the circumstances, claim less than Russia has claimed ?

Let us test the point by some examples.

It has been stated in all the papers of April 1, that Austria insists on the following points :

I. An Austrian commercial and military convention with Servia, Bosnia, Montenegro, and Albania.

II. The management of the future railway to Salonica to be under the controul of Austria.

III. Bulgaria to have no port on the *Ægean* Sea.

IV. The Sultan's supremacy in the territories left to him to be secured.

V. A direct understanding to be concluded by treaty between Austria and Turkey respecting the above conditions.

Would it not be competent for any Power in Congress to decline discussion on any or all of these Austrian demands? If so, is Russia alone to be debarred this freedom? The sixth clause of the Treaty of San Stefano, for example, constitutes Bulgaria into an autonomous Tributary State. Suppose Austria were to raise a discussion on the expediency of substituting the 'irreducible minimum' of the Conference of Constantinople for the autonomy of the Treaty of San Stefano, would it not be competent for Russia to decline discussion on that point? In other words, would she not be within her rights if she said: 'Gentlemen, you may discuss that question if you like. But my mind is made up, and I will not discuss it with you?'

Of all the Signataries of the Treaty of Paris Austria is the one most directly affected by the

Treaty of San Stefano. Yet Austria thinks the claim of Russia reasonable, and that of England unreasonable. On March 14 the Austrian Ambassador made the following communication to Lord Derby :—

The Austrian Government maintains that all the stipulations which affect European interests ought to be discussed at the Congress, and that Europe will decide upon them ; but as Prince Gortchakoff has declared to Austria that it was the Congress which would decide what are the Articles of the Preliminaries of Peace which affect the interests of Europe, and that all the points which were found to be of European interest would be submitted to its deliberations, and could not be considered as valid until they obtain the assent of all the Powers, it appears to Austria that the object of the English declaration—that is to say, the reservation of her full liberty of action, a point of view which Austria entirely shares—is thereby attained, and Count Andrassy thinks that under these circumstances it is neither for the interest of England nor of Austria to raise difficulties in regard to this question.

On March 12 our Ambassador at St. Petersburg had an interview with Prince Gortchakoff, who gave him the following explanation :—

Prince Gortchakoff also, in reply to my inquiry, stated that on the receipt of the text of the Treaty, a complete copy of it would be officially communicated to the Treaty Powers.

I observed to his Highness that any member of the Congress could therefore refer to, or bring into discussion, any Article of the Treaty.

His Highness replied that, of course, he could not impose silence on any member of the Congress, but he could only accept a discussion on those portions of the Treaty which affected European interests.

In plain language, Russia allows the Congress to decide what European interests are affected by the Treaty of San Stefano.

The Congress would itself thus divide the clauses of the Treaty into two categories. In the former would be placed all the clauses which would be ruled to affect European interests; and on these Russia has pledged herself to enter on a full and friendly discussion. In the latter would be placed—and that by the Congress—such clauses as were decided to affect Russian interests only. If, after this arrangement, any member of the Congress should choose to raise a discussion on the interests which the Congress itself had ruled to be purely Russian, still Prince Gortchakoff ‘could not impose silence;’ he would simply not take part in the discussion, since he ‘could only accept a discussion on those portions of the Treaty which affected European interests.’



What could be more reasonable or more fair? Yet Lord Salisbury—of whom I wish to speak with all the respect due to his great talents and high character—appears to me to have missed the distinction which has proved quite satisfactory to every Government in Europe but our own. In the Circular Despatch which he has just published he recalls Prince Gortchakoff's promise, pending the discussion of the terms of the armistice, 'that questions bearing on European interests would be concerted with the European Powers, and that he had given her Majesty clear and positive assurances to this effect.' To that engagement Prince Gortchakoff still adheres. It is Her Majesty's Government which has receded from the compact by seeking to impose on Russia conditions from which the other members of the Congress would be free.

But Lord Salisbury objects, not so much to 'any single article in the Treaty,' but to 'the operation of the instrument as a whole,' because it makes the 'independent action and even existence' of the Porte 'almost impossible.' That is a very good reason why a European Congress should meet to lay the foundation of a stable fabric on the ruins of an atrocious system, which

no human ingenuity or power can ever restore. It is a very bad reason for breaking up the Congress and resorting to the perilous venture of arms before all the methods of a pacific solution have been exhausted. Even if the contention of the British Government in this matter had been right, where was the harm of going into the Congress, and testing by facts whether Russia meant to play false with her promises? In that case Russia would have to deal, not with England simply as now, but with united Europe. Will not the world now say that we have declined the Congress because we distrusted the justice of our cause? And the inevitable conclusion will be that it is England, not Russia, which will be considered false to her professions. There is no gainsaying the fact that what Lord Beaconsfield has defined as 'the charter of our policy' has been scrupulously respected by Russia, and is now held over by her for the decision of the Congress. But now Lord Beaconsfield starts a new policy. 'British interests' have receded before a grander programme. He professes to be now defending 'the liberties of Europe.'

As a humble subject of the crown of Great Britain, I submit that it is the business of Europe to defend its own liberties by its own blood and its own treasure. And I protest against the quixotic knight-errantry of a Premier who laughed at the agony of the enslaved Christians of Turkey, and now comes forward as a Bombastes Furioso to champion 'the liberties of Europe.'

And when Lord Salisbury deplores the complete collapse of the Turkish Empire, I must recall to his memory that this is the very catastrophe which everybody outside the charmed circle of the British Cabinet and its philo-Turk supporters foresaw as the result of a collision with Russia. As one of the humblest of outside spectators, I wrote as follows while Lord Salisbury was sitting in the Conference of Constantinople :—

It is not a question of Turkey being coerced : the only question is, Who will coerce her? Europe united, or Russia single-handed? A sincere resolution on the part of any two of the Great Powers to coerce Turkey would ensure the obedience of the Porte, while the policy which seems to have prevailed necessitates war within a few—probably a very few—months, and with war the total collapse of the Turkish Empire, and the precipitation of several political problems which are hardly ripe for

solution, and which a wise statesmanship should have striven to mature gradually.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Salisbury himself, however, was not one of those who were blind to the issue of the conflict. 'We can foresee dangers at hand which will threaten the very existence of Turkey, if she allows herself to be entirely isolated.' Such was Lord Salisbury's warning at the close of the Conference; and for the catastrophe thus foreseen he declared that 'the responsibility would rest solely on the Sultan and his advisers.'

Russia has been blamed for not conceding the pledge on which our Government insists. My own belief is that the cause of Russia is so just that she would lose nothing eventually by making that concession. But we ought to remember that Russia's experience of giving pledges to England is not encouraging. Russia gave us a pledge about Khiva, and kept it. Yet so industrious have been her calumniators in this country that probably ninety-nine out of every hundred of educated persons are persuaded that the Emperor broke his word. Now what are the facts? The

<sup>1</sup> *The Eastern Question : its Facts and Fallacies.* Preface, p. vi.

Emperor's pledge was made to Lord Granville through Count Schouvaloff, and here is Lord Granville's own version of it, in a despatch to Lord A. Loftus :—

With regard to the expedition to Khiva, it was true (Count Schouvalow stated) that it was decided for next spring. To give an idea of its character, it was sufficient to say that it would consist of four-and-a-half battalions. Its object was to punish acts of brigandage, to recover fifty Russian prisoners, and to teach the Khan that such conduct on his part could not be continued with the impunity in which the moderation of Russia had led him to believe. Not only was it far from the intention of the Emperor to take possession of Khiva, but positive orders had been prepared to prevent it, and directions given that the conditions imposed should be such as could not in any way lead to a prolonged occupation of Khiva.<sup>1</sup>

How has that promise been broken? The Russians conquered Khiva and imposed a war indemnity of 250,000*l.*, to be paid by instalments in eighteen years. The Khan of Khiva pressed the Russians to leave a garrison permanently in his capital to keep the lawless Turcomans in order. But the Russians declined. In the treaty of peace, however, the right bank of the Oxus, a sterile strip

<sup>1</sup> See *Parliamentary Papers, Central Asia*, No. 1 (1873), p. 12.



of arid land, was ceded to Russia, and by a treaty with the Ameer of Bokhara in the following September the greater part of this acquired territory was annexed to Bokhara. Moreover, the Russian occupation of Khiva was not prolonged unnecessarily, and Captain Burnaby, who never loses an opportunity of scoring a point against Russia, states that there was not a single Russian within the Khanate of Khiva when he was there three years ago. It ought to be added that one of the first articles in the Russian Treaty with Khiva, as with every other Asiatic State, stipulates for the immediate abolition of slavery.

Let us test the promise of the Emperor of Russia by a parallel case. On crossing the frontier into France the King of Prussia issued a proclamation in which he said :—

The Emperor Napoleon having made by land and sea an attack on the German nation—which desired, and still desires, to live in peace with the French people—I have assumed the command of the German armies to repel this aggression, and I have been led by military circumstances to cross the frontiers of France. I am waging war against French soldiers, not against French citizens.

This proclamation bears the date of August 11, and was published in the *Times* of August 12,

On August 19 the Crown Prince published a proclamation at Nancy of which the opening sentence is : ' Germany makes war on the Emperor, not on the people of France.'<sup>1</sup>

At the close of the war the French people accused the Prussian Court of having violated the pledge thus given by the forcible seizure of Alsace and Lorraine. I do not say that the French are right ; but they had much better ground for their accusation than those who accuse the Emperor of Russia of having broken his word of honour in respect to Khiva.<sup>2</sup>

The conversation of the Emperor of Russia with Lord A. Loftus at Yalta in November, 1876, has been even more scandalously misrepresented. I quote the Emperor's words :

His Majesty then referred to his relations to England. He said he regretted to see that there still existed in England an inveterate suspicion of Russian policy, and a continual fear of Russian aggression and conquest. He had on several occasions given the most solemn assurances that he desired no conquest, that he aimed at no aggrandisement, and that he had not the slightest wish or

<sup>1</sup> See *Times* of August 30, 1870.

<sup>2</sup> The strip of territory taken from Khiva is much smaller in proportion to the size of the country than the portion of French territory annexed by Germany in 1871.

intention to be possessed of Constantinople. All that had been said or written about a will of Peter the Great and the aims of Catherine II. were illusions and phantoms ; they never existed in reality, and he considered that the acquisition of Constantinople would be a misfortune for Russia. There was no question of it, nor had it ever been entertained by his late father. . . . His Majesty pledged his sacred word of honour in the most earnest and solemn manner that he had no intention of acquiring Constantinople.' <sup>1</sup>

To begin with, there is here no pledge whatever except as regards Constantinople. But the date of the conversation is important. It took place on November 2, 1876—that, is nearly two months before the Conference at Constantinople. The Emperor 'desired no conquest,' 'he aimed at no aggrandisement ;' and therefore he wished to avoid war altogether by getting England to join the other Powers in a pacific policy of coercion towards the Porte. The Emperor gave no pledge then as to what he should do in the event of war being forced upon him. When war was forced upon him and he stood on Turkish soil, he hastened to communicate his intentions frankly to the English Cabinet. He told them that he intended to annex Bessarabia and some territory in Asia Minor. He

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 1 (1877), p. 643.

renewed at the same time his pledge about 'British interests.'

The Emperor has not the slightest wish or intention in any way to menace the interests of England either with regard to Constantinople, or Egypt, the Suez Canal, or India. With respect to India, His Majesty not only considers it impossible to do so, but an act of folly if practicable.<sup>1</sup>

So much for the pledge of the Emperor of Russia at Yalta. So far from thinking that it would be violated by the annexation of Bessarabia and part of Armenia, our Government expressed their 'satisfaction' at the Emperor's intentions.<sup>2</sup> This they did on August 14, 1877, and on the 9th of the following November the Prime Minister of England, in his speech at Guildhall, insinuated a charge of breach of faith against the Emperor of Russia on the ground that he had 'pledged his Imperial word of honour on one occasion that he sought no increase of territory.' The Czar gave no pledge, as I have shown. But if he had done so, the pledge could not have bound him under a totally different set of circumstances. He 'desired no conquest or aggrandisement,' and therefore wished to avert, by the

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 9 (1878), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 3.

common action of Europe, a war of which conquest would be one of the inevitable results. Instead of being a pledge against annexation, therefore, the Emperor's conversation at Yalta was a warning that if the separate action of England compelled him to act independently, he meant to 'annex territory'—a warning which he repeated in categorical language when England's policy made war necessary.

But let us test the Emperor's so-called 'pledge' by another parallel case. In the very speech in which the Premier impeached the honour of the Czar, in the event of his seeking 'increase of territory,' Lord Beaconsfield himself declared: 'England is the country of all others whose policy is peace. We are essentially a non-aggressive Power. There are no cities and no provinces that we desire to appropriate.' Observe the verb 'desire' is the word used in both cases. The Czar 'desired' no conquest. Lord Beaconsfield "'desired" no cities and no provinces.' Yet within a very short time of this 'pledge,' if we must call it so, Lord Beaconsfield annexed to the British Crown—not a province, but—a Republic as large as France; and that, too, against the protest of the President and his Government. I am not disputing the policy of the an-



nexation ; I am merely pointing out that we are not exactly the people to lecture other nations on the iniquity of annexations. Mr. Farrer has demonstrated this in a very instructive manner in the *Fortnightly Review* of March.

I quote the following figures from his article. During the last 130 years England has conquered 2,650,000 square miles, and nearly 250,000,000 people. These figures do not include Australia or any territory annexed without conquest. She has also established a garrison on every coign of vantage in every quarter of the globe. On the other hand, Russia has conquered within the last 130 years 1,642,000 square miles, but only 17,133,000 people—that is, about one-fifteenth of our conquered population during the same period. If we compare the wealth and resources of the respective territories conquered, the contrast will appear still more striking.

If Mr. Farrer had discussed the means by which we have possessed ourselves of some of these territories, I believe he would have no difficulty in showing that Russia has no reason to shrink from the comparison. Let me give one example.

India is at present the cause of that insensate hostility to Russia which animates so large a section of educated society in England. I believe that our rule in India is now, on the whole, a blessing to the population of that dependency. But there was a time when the case was very different. On December 1, 1783, Mr. Burke undertook to prove to Parliament—and he proved it with an affluence of evidence—the following indictment against the English rule in India :—

I engage myself to you to make good these three positions : First, I say that from Mount Imaus (or whatever else you call that range of mountains that walls the northern frontier of India), where it touches us in the latitude of 29°, to Cape Comorin, in the latitude of 8°, there is not a *single* prince, state, or potentate great or small, in India, with whom they [East India Company] have come into contact whom they have not sold—I say *sold*—though sometimes they have not been able to deliver according to their bargain. Secondly, I say that there is not a *single treaty* they have ever made which they have not broken. Thirdly, I say that there is not a single prince or state who ever put any trust in the Company who is not utterly ruined, and that none are in any degree secure or flourishing but in the exact proportion to their settled distrust and irreconcilable enmity to this nation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Burke's Works*, iii. 457. The italics are Mr. Burke's.

We have improved since those days. And has not Russia improved? Show me any country in the world which has made more progress in the same interval of time than the Empire of Russia has made under her present enlightened and humane ruler. Is it nothing to have given freedom to forty millions of human beings (I include the Crown peasants), and not freedom merely, but land enough to live on, and as their own freehold too? Is it nothing to have abolished slavery in every region of Asia over which Russia has established her influence? Is it nothing to have purified the courts of justice and established trial by jury throughout Russia? Is it nothing, I will add, that when other Powers of Europe were callous and faint-hearted, the Emperor of Russia should have undertaken alone to give freedom to the Christians of Turkey? Sciolists have told us that one main cause of the Russian war against Turkey was a wish to destroy Midhat Pasha's sham Constitution. They did not know that Finland is a Russian province with parliamentary institutions as free as those of England—so free that the conscription has never been applied to Finland.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I believe the Parliament of Finland have voted the con-

And this development of a great nation, as well as the prosperity of our own, it is now proposed to arrest by a war which history will characterise as the least provoked, and therefore as the most iniquitous war of this century. 'It is really painful,' said Prince Gortchakoff a year ago, 'to see two great states which together might regulate European questions for their mutual advantage and the benefit of all, excite themselves and the world by an antagonism founded on prejudices or misunderstandings.'<sup>1</sup> Russia would gladly be our friend if we would only let her. Another Emperor Alexander of Russia, whom Pitt described as 'the most magnanimous and powerful prince' of his age, made striking sacrifices 'for the deliverance of Europe.' Mr. Tierney greeted the expression with a sneer, and Pitt retorted:—'Does it not promise the deliverance of Europe when we find the armies of our allies (the Russians) rapidly advancing in a career of victory, at once the most brilliant and auspicious, that ever signalised the exertions of any combination?'<sup>2</sup>

scription within the last few months. The Finns volunteered in multitudes to fight against the Turks in the late war.

<sup>1</sup> *Turkey*, No. 1 (1877), p. 736.

<sup>2</sup> *Hansard*, vol. xxxiv. p. 1046.

Forty years ago there was a crisis in the East very similar to that which we now behold. Under the wise and generous guidance of Canning England, France, and Russia formed an alliance to coerce the Turk to give freedom to Greece. Austria then played the part that England has played now; she refused to join the allies, and gave indirect encouragement to Turkey. Canning did not live to conduct his own far-seeing policy to a successful issue. He was succeeded by the reactionary Duke of Wellington—a great soldier and a poor statesman—and the consequence was a dead-lock in the negotiations for the pacification of Greece. A Treaty was signed in London creating Greece into an autonomous vassal State, paying annual tribute to the Porte. This Treaty, however, the Porte refused to execute, with something like connivance from the Wellington Cabinet. Russia at last made war on the Porte, and extorted the complete independence of Greece in the Treaty of Adrianople; France having in the mean time cleared the Morea of Ibrahim Pasha's savage Egyptians.

The English Government looked sulkingly on the sacrifices which Russia and France were making



in the cause of freedom, and gave its good-will to the Porte. It was an ignoble policy, and Lord Palmerston scarified it at last in a powerful speech, which would do very well for the debate of next week on the mobilisation of the Reserves, and with an extract from which I may fittingly conclude this chapter. The following passage, *mutatis mutandis*, is a striking illustration of the way in which history repeats itself:—

The Morea, indeed, has been cleared of the Turks . . . I wish the arms of England had had a more direct and prominent share in that honourable exploit. But why were the arms of France checked at the Isthmus of Corinth? Was it that France herself shrank back with alarm at the consequences of a further advance? or was it that the narrow policy of England stepped in and arrested her progress? Why did France go to Greece at all, unless it was to obtain by force what Turkey would not yield to persuasion—namely, the evacuation of that territory which is destined for liberated Greece? And if that was her purpose, why did she stop short before that purpose was fully accomplished? Shall I be told that this purpose is accomplished—that the Morea and the Cyclades are to be this liberated Greece, and that the Isthmus of Corinth is its northern boundary? I say that will not be, that cannot be, it is impossible that it should be. A larger and wider limit, extending at least to the line drawn from Volo to Arta, is indispensably necessary

to Greece ; it is necessary for reasons which I shall not now go into, but reasons political, commercial, and military. Every man who has any local knowledge of the country, and whose judgment is worth having, agrees now, I believe, about this—be he English, or French, or Russian, or Greek ; be he naval, or military, or diplomatic. . . . But in this, as in clearing the Morea, France will hold the first, and England the second place. The merit of giving this extended limit will, in public opinion, be accorded to the enlightened liberality of France. France will have the credit of being supposed to have dragged England reluctantly after her. England will bear the odium of having vainly attempted to clog the progress of France. . . . I have seen that it has been said elsewhere that the allies are negotiating with Turkey. I should have thought that the allies had had enough of negotiating with Turkey about Greece, and that they had by this time discovered that *even Turkey herself would rather that on this subject they should dictate*. . . . I said that the delay in executing the treaty of July, 1827, had brought upon them that very evil of war in the East of Europe which that treaty was calculated to prevent. In that war my opinion is that the Turks were the aggressors. Turkey seized Russian ships and cargoes, expelled Russian subjects from Turkey, and shut the Bosphorus against Russian commerce—all in violation of treaties, and declared her intention of not fulfilling the Treaty of Akerman ; and all this upon no other pretence than certain things which Russia had done in conjunction with her allies, England and France, to prevail upon Turkey to accede to some arrangement about Greece. . . . It

is also my opinion that Austria should be made clearly to understand that the days of subsidies are gone by ; and it should be distinctly explained to Turkey that the people of England will be little disposed to pay for the recovery of unpronounceable fortresses on the Danube after they have been lost by the obstinate perverseness of Turkey. . . . Have the Government employed to the best advantage the opportunities of negotiation which they have had? . . . Have they, in short, laboured *bonâ fide* and in good earnest to bring about peace in the only way in which it can be accomplished? If they have not, and if by any want of resolution and decision they shall ultimately have endangered the tranquillity of all Europe ; *if, balancing between a wish to assist Turkey and an inability to find any pretence for doing so, they have, by the ambiguity and mixed character of their language to Turkey, allowed her to be deceived by what she is to expect from England, and have thereby been instrumental in encouraging her resistance to a just accommodation ;* then, indeed, they will have incurred a responsibility which I should be sorry to share. . . . Time was, and that but lately, when England was regarded by Europe as the friend of liberty and civilisation, and therefore of happiness and prosperity in every land, because it was believed that her rulers had the wisdom to discover that the selfish interests and political interests of England were best promoted by the extension of liberty and civilisation. Now, on the contrary, the prevailing opinion is that England thinks her advantage to lie in withholding from other countries that constitutional liberty which she herself enjoys. . . . It is thus that they [Europe] see in the delay in executing the

treaty of July, not so much fear of Turkish assistance, as invincible repugnance to Grecian freedom.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Palmerston's Speech on Treaty of July, 1827, which England prevented from being executed till 1829. The Speech was delivered in the House of Commons on June 1, 1829.—*Hansard*, 2nd series, vol. xxi. pp. 1663-66.

## CHAPTER XII.

WAR 'WITH A LIGHT HEART' AND ITS  
CONSEQUENCES.

EIGHT years ago the Government of France, then considered the first military Power on the Continent, made war upon Prussia 'with a light heart.' The war ended with the overthrow of a dynasty, the capture of Paris, the loss of two French provinces, and with a war indemnity which, but for the enormous internal resources of the country, would have reduced France to the rank of a second-rate Power.

That disastrous war, however, was not the war of a nation, but of a Government. Seventy-eight departments out of eighty-nine declared against it; yet the war-party carried the day. The ruler of France had been an obscure adventurer, who aspired to a brilliant throne at a time when he was unable to pay his tailor's bill. People laughed at him as a moody and eccentric dreamer, and respectable



society, on the whole, fought shy of him. Yet that dreamer became Emperor of the French and, for a time, Dictator of Europe. And the secret of his success lay in an indomitable perseverance, a sincere belief in himself and in his race, a happy knack of coining glittering phrases, and, to crown all, a complete lack of principle in the furtherance of his ends. On the eve of his catastrophe he had lost his vigour and his nerve. He had a well-meaning, but feeble and vacillating, minister; and he was much under the influence of a high-spirited lady, on whom he had conferred the title of Empress. At the critical moment, when the question of peace or war was being discussed in the French Cabinet, the Emperor retired into an inner chamber to consult the Empress, and when he came back he declared for war. The Empress had, in a few impassioned sentences, persuaded him that France had been insulted, and must be avenged.

*Absit omen!* But England at this moment appears to me to resemble with startling closeness the condition of France just before the outbreak of the Franco-German War. The mad war-party in France had no definite purpose before them beyond what they expressed in the vague and criminal cry of

‘à Berlin!’ Our war-party is in the same predicament. All the other Powers of Europe are urging us to go into Congress in order to discuss and to adjust the dislocation of political affairs caused by the Treaty of San Stefano. We decline unless Russia binds herself by conditions which have no precedent in the history of civilised diplomacy, and from which every other member of Congress is to be free; and because Russia, in courteous and conciliatory language, declines to make the concession, we cry out for war.

Now let us consider what war ‘with a light heart’ means for England. For a time it may be popular. By raising the income-tax above the stratum of the household suffrage voters the Government has contrived to relieve the working-classes, in appearance, from the immediate pinch of war. It is a singular policy for a Conservative Government. But the relief to the working classes is only in appearance. It is they, after all, who will have to suffer most in the event of a great war. Every article which conduces to their comfort and well-being will be more difficult of access. In so unprovoked a war Russia will spare no effort to damage us. Privateers under her letters of marque

will sweep our commerce off the seas. Our carrying trade will be transferred to neutral bottoms ; and once lost, it will not be easy to recover it, as America has found to her cost.

England profited by her calamity. America and Germany, in case of war, will profit by ours.

I have argued elsewhere that, on the mere ground of self-interest, Russia can have no designs on India. But if we force an unjust and cruel war on Russia, she will undoubtedly do her best to paralyze us by stirring disaffection in India. Who can divine the result? Those who know India best shake their heads gravely at the security of our tenure in the event of another mutiny. One of the best informed and most experienced men in our Indian Civil Service has assured us that the Mussulmans only await a favourable opportunity for hazarding once more the recovery of their rule on the chances of another revolt.<sup>1</sup> On the eve of sending a Plenipotentiary into a peace Congress, eighteen months ago, our Premier

<sup>1</sup> *The Mussulmans of India.* By W. W. Hunter, chap. iii. Mr. Hunter is well known as the author of *Annals of Rural Bengal*, and a learned *Dissertation on the non-Aryan Races of India*. His experience of the country, I believe, extends over thirty years.

threatened Russia glibly with the possibility of more than two campaigns against a British army. But in a struggle such as this, though we might make Russia bankrupt, we should not exhaust her. And if we had trouble in India, where should we find our men for the third campaign? Does anybody suppose that this country would submit to the conscription? In our last trial of strength we found it hard enough to conquer Russia in more than one campaign, though we had the first military Power in Europe, backed by Sardinia and Turkey, on our side. This time we should fight alone, and when Russia and ourselves were thoroughly exhausted, we should probably find the military Powers of the Continent beginning to remodel the map of Europe, and possibly also of Turkey, without our being able to prevent serious detriment to British interests.

And with these possibilities staring us in the face, our Government is driving the country recklessly to the dizzy brink of a war of which no one can forecast the end or the consequences. A man who kills his fellow in a passion is by the law of England condemned to be hanged. How shall we appraise the guilt of a Government which heedlessly sends

myriads of human beings to mutilations, wounds, and death ?

A war without adequate cause is murder on a huge scale ; and no war, however adequate the cause, is justifiable until every expedient of a pacific solution has been exhausted.

‘ The wars of civilised nations (says Dr. Johnson) make very slow changes in the system of empires. The public perceives scarcely any alteration but an increase of debt ; and the few individuals who are benefited are not supposed to have the clearest right to their advantages. If he that shared the danger enjoyed the profit, and, after bleeding in the battle grew rich by the victory, he might show his gain without envy. But at the conclusion of a ten years’ war how are we recompensed for the death of multitudes, and the expense of millions, by contemplating the sudden glories of paymasters and agents, contractors and commissioners, whose equipages shine like meteors, and whose palaces rise like exhalations ? ’

Consider for a moment what wars have entailed on the working classes of England. From the war with France in 1691 to the year 1871<sup>1</sup> comprises a

<sup>1</sup> I have not been able to get the figures down to the present year.



period of 178 years, of which 67 years were war; and 111 peace; and the capital expenditure for war during that period was 910,589,522*l.* Our payments in hard cash, for interest only, during the same period has been 2,130,882,179*l.*; making a total in loans and interest, of 3,041,471,701*l.*

And this enormous sum does not include increased taxation, nor does it take account of the injury to trade and private property incidental to a state of war. And it is to be noted that the figures given above do not represent the full amount of the cost.

This is for simple interest only (says Mr. Henry Lloyd Morgan); yet even this gigantic sum represents only a comparatively small portion of the actual costs of war. Moreover, it must be remembered that all this has been abstracted from the working capital of the country; therefore, in reality, compound interest should be charged, to represent even the outlay for payment of the simple interest; to which must be added a much larger sum for extra taxation to carry on war.

How different might England have been now, how different the condition of the working classes, if all this huge waste of treasure had been avoided! And no dispassionate student of history can

doubt that the vast proportion of it might have been avoided to the country's honour and interest.

And have the classes who now live in prosperity and ease considered what war *might* mean for them? Have they reflected on the enormous difference which Mr. Disraeli's Reform Bill<sup>1</sup> has made in the balance of political power in this country? The great majority of the voters, that is, of the law-makers of Great Britain, are now

<sup>1</sup> 'I desire to protest, in the most earnest language which I am capable of using, against the political morality on which the manoeuvres of this year have been based. If you borrow your political ethics from the ethics of the political adventurer, you may depend upon it the whole of your representative institutions will crumble beneath your feet. . . . I entreat honourable gentlemen opposite not to believe that my feelings on this subject are dictated simply by my hostility to this particular measure, though I object to it most strongly, as the House is aware. But even if I took a contrary view—if I deemed it to be most advantageous—I still should deeply regret that the position of the executive should have been so degraded as it has been in the present Session; I should deeply regret to find that the House of Commons has applauded a policy of legerdemain; and I should, above all things, regret that this great gift to the people—if gift you think it—should have been purchased at the cost of a political betrayal which has no parallel in our Parliamentary Annals, which strikes at the root of all that mutual confidence which is the very soul of our party Government, and on which only the strength and freedom of our representative institutions can be sustained.' (*Hansard*, vol. 188, p. 1539. July 15, 1867.) Lord Salisbury's Speech on the third reading of Mr. Disraeli's Reform Bill.

men working for wages, with no other property to attach them to the present order of things. God forbid that I should suggest the probability of their ever wishing to tamper with the property of other people! But they have it in their power to do so, and therefore it behoves those who have property to recognise its responsibilities with at least as much promptness as they insist on its rights. If the working-classes of the United Kingdom abstain from interfering with the existing rights of property, it will be because they believe in the beneficial influence of those rights on society at large, not from any feeling in favour of the abstract sacredness of private property.

The world has seen many democracies built on the broadest basis of the suffrage ; but it has never seen, till England set the example, a State in which the great majority of voters were men living on weekly or daily wages. The democracies of antiquity are no exception to this remark, for the class corresponding to our labourers did not consist, in those States, of freemen in full possession of political power, but of slaves who were excluded from the franchise, and had no means of making their power felt except by the expedient of a servile war.

Nor is America a case in point, for the citizens of the Union who live on daily wages are in a minority of the whole population; and, moreover, land is so plentiful that even a working man may, with ordinary intelligence and thrift, become the owner of land after a few years of industry, or may otherwise raise himself above the level of his present social position.

France, too, has universal suffrage. But the great majority of the French population has property in the soil. Some years ago—and there is no reason to suppose that the relative proportions have changed since then—the population of France was distributed as follows:—

Town population . . . . .	7,000,000
Landed proprietors and their families . . .	20,000,000
Agricultural labourers and their families . .	3,000,000
Artisans employed in agricultural districts . .	2,000,000
Total . . . . .	<hr/> 32,000,000

The town population includes, of course, a large portion of the propertied class—such as merchants, professional men, government employés, and persons living on their private income; so that, on a fair estimate, the proportion of the population of France who live on wages—in other

words, who have no direct interest in property—would seem to be about one-third. With us the proportion is quite the other way, and the classes interested in property, in landed property especially, are growing rapidly and alarmingly smaller. Various causes, into which it is not necessary here to enter, are conducing to this result. But the result itself is one which no thoughtful person can contemplate without serious misgivings as to its possible influence in certain contingencies.

These considerations ought not, indeed, to inspire us with any feelings of distrust or suspicion towards those whom Mr. Lowe has described as ‘our masters ;’ but it ought to make that portion of our population which is sometimes vulgarly spoken of as ‘society’ think twice before it embarks on an enterprise which may bring misery to the working classes of England, and with misery the temptations which usually follow in its train. The Parisian crowd who shouted ‘à Berlin!’ as the French guard marched through the streets of the capital to defeat and captivity, were soon heard crying ‘à la frontière!’ to the ministers who made the war ; and a little later, ‘à bas!’ to the dynasty of Napoleon. If indeed the Government should



succeed in dragging the country into the most criminal war of modern times, I venture to predict that those whom the late Foreign Secretary described as his 'employers' will, within a year, exact a stern retribution from those who so needlessly provoked it. It is perhaps in keeping with the character and career of the Prime Minister that he should feel a gambler's excitement in a great European war. He has given no hostages to fortune. He leaves nothing behind him but a name; and if the Treaty of San Stefano is confirmed in its chief points by Europe, Lord Beaconsfield's political reputation will have received a blow from which, at his age, he can have no hope of recovery. If we go to war, therefore, it will not be for the honour or interest of England, but in defence of the posthumous reputation of the Right Honourable Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield.





March, 1873.



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